DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 294 CE 067 527

AUTHOR	Devine, Marion; And Others
TITLE	School for Skills: Vignette Studies. A National Survey of the Development through TVEI of Personal and Transferable Skills. Technical and Vocational Education Initiative. Report.
INSTITUTION	Scottish Council for Research in Education, Edinburgh.
SPONS AGENCY	Scottish Office Industry Dept., Edinburgh.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	85p.; For a related report, see CE 067 526.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Basic Skills; Case Studies; *Critical Thinking; Disabilities; Educational Research; Foreign Countries; Individual Development; *Interpersonal Competence; Problem Solving; Secondary Education; *Skill Development; Social Development; Special Education; Special Needs Students; Staff Development; Student Records; Transfer of Training; *Vocational Education; Work Experience
IDENTIFIERS	*Scotland; *Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

ABSTRACT

This publication focuses on the vignette studies done as part of an evaluation of the development of those transferable and personal skills which had been given prominence by the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in Scotland. It presents results of a qualitative study of individual practices. Four vignettes are based on practices in mainstream secondary schools identified by TVEI advisers and project coordinators as examples of interesting practice arising from each school's commitment to TVEI. The fifth vignette focuses on a detailed study of practice in one authority that operated a separate system for pupils with special educational needs and a visit to one mainstream school with a special unit for pupils with special needs. Chapter 1 describes the general approach used in the vignette studies--school visits during which staff were interviewed and follow-up questionnaires. Each vignette is then presented as a separate chapter with its own conclusions: (1) a whole-school approach to the development of skills; (2) personal and social development for senior pupils; (3) curriculum-led skills development; (4) staff development as the key to the development of skills; and (5) development of TVEI skills in pupils with special educational needs. Chapter 7 draws together points of interest from all the vignette studies; Chapter 8 comprises a brief overall summary drawn from both the national survey and the vignette studies. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 376 294

School for Skills: Vignette Studies

A national survey of the development through TVEI of personal and transferable skills

REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CF067 S27

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE SCOTTISH OFFICE
Industry Department

2

CE

Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

School for Skills: Vignette Studies

Marion Devine
Sue Minguard
Harry Black
Natalie Fenwick

The Scottish Council for Research in Education

Crown Copyright 1994

First published 1994

Report arising from a research project funded by the Scottish Office Industry Department.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the assistance and insights provided by members of the project committee throughout the period of this study. Thank you also to all the TVEI project co-ordinators who assisted us in our contacts with schools and employers

We would also like to express our gratitude to all those who took the time to complete our questionnaires . These included senior staff and pupils in schools, schools liaison staff and pupils in FE colleges, school liaison staff in HE institutions and employers.

Special thanks are due to teachers and pupils in the various schools which we visited during the second stage of the study.

Thank you also to Kay Young our project secretary who successfully coped with our frequent changes of content and style.

Marion Devine
Sue Mingard
Harry Black
Natalie Fenwick

Contents

	Page
List of tables	(vii)
List of figures	(viii)
Executive summary	1
Valued skills	1
Changes in the performance of young people	1
Factors influencing change	1
Pupils' ease with skills	1
Comparisons between today's pupils and those of five years ago	1
Teaching methods	2
Factors influencing changes in teaching methods	2
Work experience	2
Records of Achievement (NRA/ROA)	2
TVEI-related experiences for school staff	3
School/industry links	3
Particular approaches to promoting the acquisition of 'TVEI' skills	3
Pupils with special educational needs	4
1 Introduction to the vignettes	5
Vignette methods	6
The vignette studies	6
Special education	6
Contents of School for Skills (Part two)	6
2 Whole-school audit of skills	7
Characteristics of the sample	7
Staff characteristics	7
Pupil characteristics	8
Information skills	8
The skills audit	9
The links with IT	9
The resource centre	9
Developing 'Information Skills' units	9
Teachers' involvement with information skills	10
Pupils' opinions of information skills	10
Records of Achievement (ROA)	12
Transferable skills	12
Responsibility for ROA	13
Links between information skills and ROA	13
The 'whole school' influence	14
The 'TVEI' skills	15
Teaching methods	15
Responsibility for teaching 'TVEI' skills	16
Changes in pupil competence in skills	16
Pupils' understanding of 'TVEI' skills	17

		Page
	How easy are these skills for pupils?	18
	Evidence on teaching methods from the pupils' point of view	19
	Responsibilities given to pupils	20
	The impact of school initiatives	20
3	**PSD for senior pupils**	22
	Characteristics of the sample	22
	Personal and Social Development	22
	What does PSD for senior pupils comprise?	22
	What are pupils' and teachers' views about PSD?	24
	'TVEI' skills	27
	Responsibility for teaching 'TVEI' skills	27
	Changes in pupil competence	27
	Do pupils find these skills easy?	28
	Responsibilities	29
	Additional responsibilities given to senior pupils	30
	Records of Achievement (ROA)	31
	Teaching methods	31
	Summary	32
4	**Curriculum-led development of skills**	33
	Characteristics of the sample	33
	The skills curriculum	34
	Subject-related work	34
	Physical education (PE)	35
	Social and vocational skills (SVS)	35
	Staff development	36
	The ethos of the school	36
	Perceptions of the teachers	37
	What were teachers views about SVS?	37
	Teaching methods	39
	Do teachers feel that pupils' performance in skills has improved?	39
	Perceptions of the pupils	40
	Teaching methods	40
	Conclusion	42
5	**Staff development as the key to the development of skills**	44
	Characteristics of the sample	44
	Staff development programmes	45
	Thinking skills course	45
	Flexible learning	45
	Other staff development	47
	Enterprise	47
	Influences on pupils	48
	Questions from the national survey	49
	Teaching methods	49
	Teachers' responsibility for teaching skills	50
	Increase in pupil competence on skills	50
	Pupils perceptions	51
	Teaching methods	51
	The impact of school initiatives	52

	Page
6 Developing skills in pupils with special educational needs	54
Gathering evidence	54
The curriculum	55
Teaching methods	56
Development of skills	56
How did the schools develop skills in their pupils?	56
Schools for pupils with severe and profound difficulties	57
Schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties	58
Responsibilities for pupils	59
Assessment of skills	60
How did the schools assess pupils' skills?	60
Records of Achievement (NRA/ROA)	61
Has pupil competence changed?	65
Further education and training	63
Whole school and TVEI support	64
Special education in a mainstream school	65
Pupils in the special unit	65
Importance of skills	65
Subject teacher's views	66
Support for mainstream teachers	66
The advantages of a special unit	66
7 Points from the vignettes	68
Whole-school approaches	68
Specific skills-based courses	68
Teaching, learning and assessment in mainstream and special schools	69
Continuity between special schools and further education or training	70
Support from TVEI	71
8 The role of TVEI	72
Factors influencing changes in pupil performance	72
Factors influencing changes in teaching methods	72
Successful approaches to the acquisition of 'TVEI' skills	73
Looking to the future	74

Page

Tables

2.1	Pupils' aspirations	8
2.2	Subjects in which information skills are taught	11
2.3	Whole school structure and practices which, to a great extent, encourage the development of skills (percentage of respondents)	14
2.4	A list of subjects with an accompanying example for each skill	18
2.5	Percentages of pupils who found these skills very easy	18
3.1	Percentage of pupils who find these skills very easy	28
4.1	Pupils' aspirations	34
4.2	Subjects which help to develop skills	41
4.3	Percentage of pupils who find these skills very easy	42
5.1	Pupils' aspirations	44
5.2	Percentage of pupils who find these skills very easy	51
6.1	Respondents' position in the schools	54

Figures

		Page
2.1	Teaching and using a range of information skills	10
2.2	Pupils' perceptions of the usefulness of information skills	11
2.3	Pupils who agreed about the benefits of profiling	12
2.4	Teachers' claims about the methods they use and how these have changed	15
2.5	Whether teachers should or do teach certain skills	16
2.6	Teachers' views on how pupil competence has changed	17
2.7	Teaching methods used in class and those preferred by pupils (Percentage of pupils)	19
3.1	Pupils' opinions of work experience	24
3.2	The benefits of S5 programme for PSD	25
3.3	The benefits of S6 programme for PSD	25
3.4	Teachers' opinions on the benefits of the PSD programme for senior pupils	26
3.5	Skills which teachers should and do teach	27
3.6	Increases in pupil competence	28
3.7	Responsibilities given to pupils to some extent (Teachers' views)	29
3.8	Responsibilities given to pupils at least quite often (Pupils' views)	30
4.1	Teachers' views of the effectiveness of SVS and subject teaching at developing transferable skills	38
4.2	Teachers' opinions on the methods they use and how they have changed	39
4.3	Teachers views of increases in pupil competence	40
5.1	The influence of different initiatives on the development of skills	48
5.2	Teachers' opinions on the methods they use and how they have changed	49
5.3	Whether teachers should and do teaching certain skills	50
5.4	Changes in pupil competence	50
5.5	Teaching methods used and those which suit pupils (Percentage of pupils)	52
5.6	The influences of different initiatives on subject teaching	52
6.1	Staff in special schools who felt they should and did teach these skills	55
6.2	Teaching methods which are used frequently and those which have increased	56
6.3	Views about work experience	60
6.4	Views about enterprise projects	60
6.5	Staff who felt competence in these skills had increased	62

Executive summary

The skills which were the subject of this evaluation were, communicating, working individually and in teams, problem solving, taking responsibility and enterprise.

Valued skills

- Oral communication was considered very important by the majority of employers and staff in further and higher education. In addition, staff in HE institutions valued the ability to work individually and to solve problems. Employers valued the ability to work as part of a team.

Changes in the performance of young people

- More than half of respondents in schools, HE institutions and FE colleges noted an increase in the ability of young people to communicate orally, work in teams, solve problems and use modern technology.
- Senior staff in schools were almost unanimous in noting increases in all skills.
- Over 80% of employers were satisfied with the performance of recent school leavers in the ability to communicate orally and work in a team.

Factors influencing change

- Changes in the school curriculum, various aspects of TVEI and changes in teaching methods were the three most frequently mentioned factors responsible for improvements in competence.

Pupils' ease with skills

- The majority of both school pupils and college students found working in teams and using technology very easy.
- For both groups of young people the skills of communicating in a foreign language, problem solving, taking responsibility and enterprise were difficult.
- Girls were more likely to feel at ease in communicating, working in teams and working individually. Boys were more likely to be at ease with modern technology, problem solving and enterprise.
- Pupils intending to go to university, found most of the skills easy, those intending to go straight into a job found them difficult. There were no differences on skills related to the use of modern technology.

Comparisons between today's pupils and those of five years ago

- There have been improvements in the ease with which pupils use skills over the whole ability range (as measured by pupil aspiration).

- The greatest improvement in pupil 'comfort' is in teamwork and the least improvement is in oral communication.

Teaching methods

- An increase in teaching which used modern technology was reported by staff in almost all schools. Staff in three-quarters of schools also reported that the use of group work, differentiated work, resource-based learning and team teaching had increased.
- Teachers in most schools reported that whole-class teaching had decreased.
- The pattern of changes in teaching methods in FE colleges and school was similar although more change seemed to be taking place in schools than in colleges.
- Most young people identified whole-class teaching as being very common About one-third of pupils stated that pupils very often worked at their own pace on the same work as others in the class. Less than 10% of pupils reported that group work, differentiated work or team teaching was commonly used.
- Working at their own pace on the same work as others was favoured by the largest single group of young people. Less than one-third of them thought that whole-class teaching suited them very well.
- Teaching methods which helped learning appeared to be better matched for girls than for boys and better matched for pupils at S3/S4 than at S5/S6.

Factors influencing changes in teaching methods

- Changes in teaching methods were reported to have been brought about by the influence of TVEI, new courses and targeted staff development.

Work experience

- The great majority of employers provided work experience for pupils and identified this link with schools as the one they valued most highly.
- More than three-quarters of employers agreed that school leavers who had been on work experience were better prepared for employment than those who had not.
- Staff and pupils in the majority of schools believed that work experience gave pupils the opportunity to find out what employers want and gave pupils more responsibility than usual. In addition, young people thought that it gave them the opportunity to work in a team and on their own and to improve their communication skills.
- Girls were more positive than boys towards a whole range of opportunities connected with work experience. The exceptions were in the opportunities to solve problems and use computers or technology where boys were more positive.

Records of Achievement (NRA/ROA)

- One-quarter of employers who had seen a NRA/ROA had been involved in commenting on the format or content

- Staff in two-thirds of FE colleges encouraged students to add to their NRA/ROA while at college.
- Very small numbers of HE or FE institutions used NRA/ROA as a source of information on prospective students.
- More than three-quarters of employers found the document useful for information on qualifications and credits, details of school achievements and achievements and experiences outside school.

TVEI-related experiences for school staff

- Responses from over three-quarters of schools indicated that at least some* staff had been involved in TVEI-related staff development, curriculum development and had benefited from additional resources.

School/industry links

- Over 90% of employers provided work experience for pupils in school and about half of them had other direct contacts with pupils through the provision of career advice and mock interviews.
- Employers would welcome further involvement in curriculum development and school/industry working groups.
- A larger percentage of schools than FE colleges were involved in education/industry links. Very small numbers of either were involved in teacher placement in industry.

Particular approaches to promoting the acquisition of 'TVEI' skills

- Whole-school approaches reported in two of the vignette studies were an audit of skills and relevant staff development. Several common themes emerged for the successful implementation of these initiatives:

  begin with a small band of enthusiasts;

  identify existing good practice;

  consult widely;

  make the best use of existing expertise within the school;

  analyse staff needs;

  target staff development;

  provide staff development for all staff;

  phase in initiatives;

  ensure that senior management is seen to be supportive.

- Schools used a number of special courses designed to promote a range of personal and transferable skills. These included SVS as an entitlement, PSD for senior pupils and enterprise education. To a large extent these courses depended on:

  making pupils aware of the skills being taught;

---

*In the questionnaire a four point scale was used where

1 = most staff 2 = some staff

3 = a few staff 4 = no-one

using pupil-centred teaching methods;

emphasising choice for pupils;

explicit coverage and assessment of identified skills.

Pupils with special educational needs

- Staff in special schools were of the opinion that the acquisition and development of transferable skills permeated the whole curriculum for their pupils.
- The skills of oral communication, solving problems and taking responsibility were of paramount importance.
- Whenever appropriate, modern technology was used to enhance pupils' ability to communicate.
- Staff in special schools were more likely than staff in mainstream schools to use team teaching and differentiated teaching. They also used teaching methods which were not mentioned by any teachers in mainstream education:

  positive teaching; gentle teaching and behaviour modification.
- Where learning support was available to mainstream teachers over a number of years, these teachers became more aware of the need for differentiated teaching and became less dependent on learning support specialists for assistance.

1 Introduction to the vignettes

In 1993 the TVEI Unit of the Scottish Office Industry Department asked SCRE to conduct an evaluation of the development of a range of personal and transferable skills which had been given particular prominence by TVEI. These skills comprised communicating, working individually and in teams, problem solving, taking responsibility and enterprise. The evaluation had two main aims:

- to assess the extent to which TVEI has enhanced the acquisition of transferable and personal skills;
- to identify any particular approaches used in TVEI which have proved successful in promoting the acquisition of these skills.

The first of these aims was met largely by a national survey which was reported in Part 1 of this publication. The second aim required a more qualitative study of individual practices which we have reported in this booklet as a series of five vignettes.

Four of the vignettes are based on practices in mainstream secondary schools. The schools were identified by TVEI advisers and project co-ordinators as examples of interesting practice arising from each school's commitment to TVEI. The fifth vignette arose from the need to do justice to the concerns of TVEI to improve the skills and qualifications of young people of all abilities including those with special educational needs. A study of practice in one local authority was carried out and a mainstream school in a different authority which incorporated a special unit was visited.

Each vignette is reported separately. None of the staff in the schools visited would claim to be expert in meeting the challenge of promoting the development of personal and transferable skills in their pupils nor would they claim that their strategies are unique. Nevertheless, they were all considered to be committed to the philosophy of TVEI and to providing opportunities for young people to develop and practise the 'TVEI' skills. While all schools used a range of strategies to encourage the development of skills, some of their approaches are of particular interest.

Vignette A	A whole-school approach to the development of skills.
Vignette B	Personal and social development for senior pupils.
Vignette C	Curriculum-led skills development.
Vignette D	Staff development as the key to the development of skills.
Vignette E	The development of 'TVEI' skills in pupils with special educational needs.

Vignette methods

The vignette studies

The same basic method was followed for each of the schools in the vignette studies. Each school was visited for up to five days by two or three researchers. During this time interviews were held with key members of staff. These usually included members of the Senior Management Team and other staff chosen because of their involvement in the particular initiatives which were the focus of our visit. Other staff included principal subject teachers, senior teachers, guidance staff, class teachers and non-teaching staff. Where appropriate, group interviews were held with pupils from the years S3, S4, S5 and S6.

As a follow-up to these visits, questionnaires were prepared for all members of staff in each school. These questionnaires included a common core of questions based on those in the national survey plus a number of additional questions focusing on each school's particular area of interest. Questionnaires were also completed by one class in each of the years S3, S4, S5 and S6. The choice of class was left to the discretion and convenience of the school. Again the pupil questionnaires contained both a core of questions from the national survey and, where appropriate, additional questions pertinent to the school.

Special education

A similar method was employed for the study on pupils with special educational needs. In the local authority study, a system of separate provision for pupils with special educational needs was in operation at the time of our study. There were six schools altogether catering for a range of special needs. Four of the schools were visited and the headteacher and one class teacher were interviewed in each. Questionnaires were sent to all schools for all members of staff. In one other authority we visited a mainstream school which included a special unit. Members of the special unit were interviewed and subject teachers who were involved in teaching pupils with special educational needs were asked to complete a questionnaire.

Contents of School for Skills (Part two)

An executive summary of points arising from both the national survey and the vignette studies precedes this introductory chapter. Thereafter, each of the five vignettes is presented as a separate chapter with its own conclusions. There are two additional chapters. Chapter 7 draws together points of interest from all the vignette studies and Chapter 8 comprises a brief overall summary drawn from both the national survey and the vignette studies.

2 Whole-school audit of skills

Our first visit to School A early in June 1993 coincided with the first of three days set aside for the school's annual S5/S6 induction conference. We were, therefore, met at the door by a group of S5 and S6 pupils waiting to welcome strangers to their school. It was a fitting start to our study as we were there, not to take part in the induction conference which had been planned long before, but to talk to both staff and pupils about the development of transferable skills including taking responsibility and communicating. Here were groups of pupils putting these skills into practice - taking the responsibility for greeting external speakers and other participants and escorting them to one or other of a wide range of planned activities.

The school is a large denominational school set on the edge of a densely populated area in central Scotland. It has been involved with TVEI as an extension school since 1990. Staff have devoted much energy and time to a whole-school approach designed to support strategies for learning. This initiative has involved identifying and developing skills which pupils can use to learn effectively across a wide range of subjects.

Initially the focus was on 'information skills' within a learning cycle of planning, researching, recording, organising, presenting and evaluating. At the same time, preparations for the introduction of Records of Achievement were underway and it was recognised that pupils and staff needed to be aware of a wider range of 'transferable' skills. The two developments had much in common:

> *We have always seen the two intermarrying. They were part of the same process, recognising the skills that were required.*

The major part of this vignette is, therefore, taken up with a description and discussion of the particular ways in which this school has set about identifying and developing personal and transferable skills both within the information skills initiative and in the broader approach to Records of Achievement.

■ Characteristics of the sample

Discussions were held with 11 members of staff (including senior management, teachers and support staff) and four groups of young people drawn from S3 (two groups), S4 and S5. At a later date, teachers and one class of pupils in each of the years S3 to S6 were asked to complete questionnaires similar to those used in the national survey. Additional questions based on our earlier discussions with staff and pupils were included in these questionnaires. Questionnaire data were received from a total of 85 pupils and 34 teachers.

Staff characteristics

Of the teachers who responded to the survey, 17 were male and 17 were female. The great majority had more than eight years teaching experience and included

principal teachers, assistant principal teachers, senior teachers and class teachers from a total of eight subject areas. The teachers all volunteered to take part in the research project and, together with those to whom we spoke during our visits, formed about half of the staff in the school.

Pupil characteristics

Of the 85 pupils from whom we received a questionnaire, 60% were girls and 40% were boys. Because of the timing of the project no S6 pupils were available to complete the questionnaires so the responses are from S3 to S5 only. More than 90% of pupils intended staying on at school until the end of the sixth year. Table 2.1 compares what these pupils hope to do on leaving school with pupils from the national sample.

Table 2.1: Pupils' aspirations

	School A (%)	National sample (%)
Go straight into a job	4	18
Go on a government training programme	0	3
Get a degree	76	51
Go to college for other qualifications	20	23
Other	0	5

Compared with the national sample girls were slightly over-represented and pupils' aspirations were higher. This could have an effect on any findings of comparisons between the two groups.

■ Information skills

A whole-school approach to the development of information skills was introduced because there was a feeling that, particularly with the introduction of Standard Grade, many teachers expected pupils to be able to use a range of skills which were not explicitly being taught:

> *We were assuming a lot of skills. It would be a good idea to audit departments to find out what skills they were using.*

Originally a small group of interested staff was formed. These included subject teachers, the school librarian, a learning support specialist, PT computing (as an Information Technology (IT) specialist) and a member of the senior management team (who was also the TVEI school co-ordinator). They started by looking within the school at existing pockets of good practice related to information skills. In-school in-service time was used to clarify the benefits of a whole-school approach as follows:

- ensure that certain skills are not being 'over-taught' or 'under-taught';
- share successful teaching strategies and expertise;
- improve communication between departments to the benefit of staff and pupils;
- promote co-operation between departments in the production of Information Skills materials;
- ensure that all staff members are aware of which Information Skills are being taught, when and to whom;
- provide an active network of staff to promote the teaching of Information Skills.

A further potential benefit to pupils was referred to in discussions with the Rector:

> *That's been one of our problems in secondary school, the discrete nature of learning....to break that barrier and for children to see that learning is interconnected is a significant step forward. It's taken some time the notion that the skills required in one area are the same skills that can help you in another.*

The skills audit

Pre-arranged time was set aside for meetings between all staff from each department and members of the Information Skills group. The questionnaire was presented on an OHP and was completed by the Information Skills group members:

> *People were comfortable in their own departmental setting to question and discuss definitions.*

The skills were organised within the headings of the learning cycle (planning, researching, recording, organising, presenting and evaluating) and information was collected on whether these skills were 'taught' or 'used' and whether they involved some or all pupils. For each department, information on the technological enhancement of any skills was added.

A number of posters was prepared each defining and illustrating one of the key skills identified as being in common use across the curriculum. For example, there is a poster on 'brainstorming' as a tool for planning, a poster on 'skimming' as a skill for researching and a poster on 'note taking' as an aid to recording. These posters are displayed in classrooms as guidance for pupils.

The links with IT

The PT computing had been co-opted on to the Information Skills group at an early stage to advise on the use of hardware and software as tools to help with various skills within the learning cycle. He was given development time to carry out a whole-school audit of hardware and software and provided a list of resources for staff matched to the stages of the learning cycle. He also carried out a survey of staff development needs and organised training in targeted areas.

The resource centre

The resource centre has been created by combining the library and the learning support base. Both the learning support specialist and the librarian have been on the Information Skills group since its inception and play a large part in ensuring that pupils are aware of the various skills. The posters on information skills are on display in the resource centre as they are in classrooms. Pupils (and staff) have access to a wide range of resources, including plenty of modern technology, both for researching information and for presenting information.

Developing 'Information Skills' units

The first unit based on a deliberate move towards promoting information skills was developed in S3 by staff in the English department. It was recognised that teachers needed to see that it could work in other subject areas and the science department was given development time to build on what had been done in English. Two members of the department were given time to produce units which would explicitly teach and use information skills in science. The librarian and the learning support specialist were involved from the start.

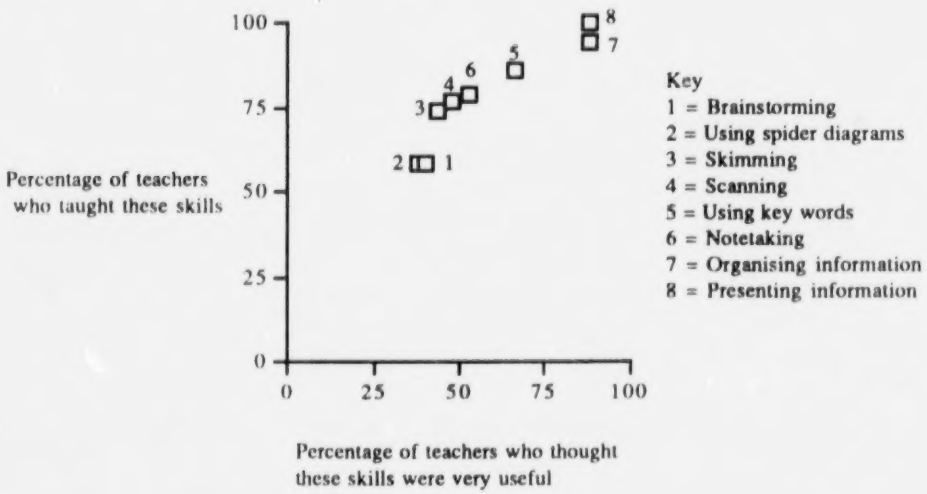
The development of information skills units has now been extended to other subject areas such as history, PE, geography and music. The Information Skills group (which has been expanded to draw in interested teachers from a range of subjects) meets once each month and drafts of units which have been prepared are brought to the group. They are discussed and, if necessary, amended before they are used with pupils. As one member of the group said:

> *We have learned enough to be open and honest and to say well that's not working we could improve it. It might just be the presentation, it could be the actual unit.*

Teachers' involvement with information skills

Half of the staff who responded to the questionnaire said that they had been involved in the audit of information skills and slightly less than half indicated that they had taught an information skills unit. Staff were asked to indicate how useful they thought the information skills were and whether or not they taught them in their classroom. Figure 2.1 looks at the relationship between using a skill and teaching it.

Figure 2.1: Teaching and using a range of information skills



Those skills which were found to be very useful by large numbers of teachers eg organising and presenting information, were also taught by large numbers of teachers. The pattern of results suggests that teachers share the responsibility for teaching skills and that they do not depend on other teachers to teach those skills which they consider very useful in their subject areas.

Pupils' opinions of information skills

During our discussions with pupils we asked if they were aware of the term 'information skills' and if they could give us examples. These were group discussions and there was usually a degree of initial hesitancy. However, as soon as one person in the group remembered that 'Information Skills' was the heading for the skills listed in the library, others then recalled a range of skills particularly those of skimming, scanning and note taking. Some pupils mentioned that the same posters were displayed in English classrooms.

The pupils who completed the questionnaire were asked to indicate if they had been taught any of the information skills for which posters had been prepared and if so in which subject(s). They were also asked to say whether these skills were useful in other subjects. More than 90% of respondents said that they had been taught the skills of brainstorming, using spider diagrams, skimming, scanning, looking for keywords and note taking.

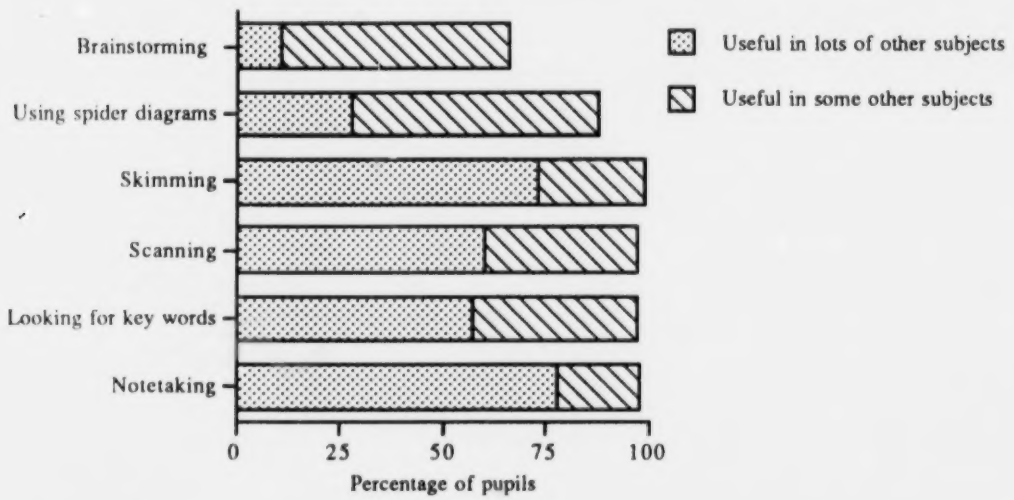
The initiative started in the English department so it is not surprising that English was named by pupils as a subject which taught every one of the skills. The subjects which were mentioned by 10% or more of pupils are shown in Table 2.2 in order of frequency.

Table 2.2: Subjects in which information skills are taught

Brainstorming	maths, English, RE
Using spider diagrams	English, chemistry, PSE
Skimming	English, geography
Scanning	English, geography
Using keywords	English, chemistry, history, geography
Note taking	English, chemistry, physics, history, geography

Figure 2.2 shows the extent to which pupils thought that each skill could be used in other subject areas.

Figure 2.2: Pupils' perceptions of the usefulness of information skills



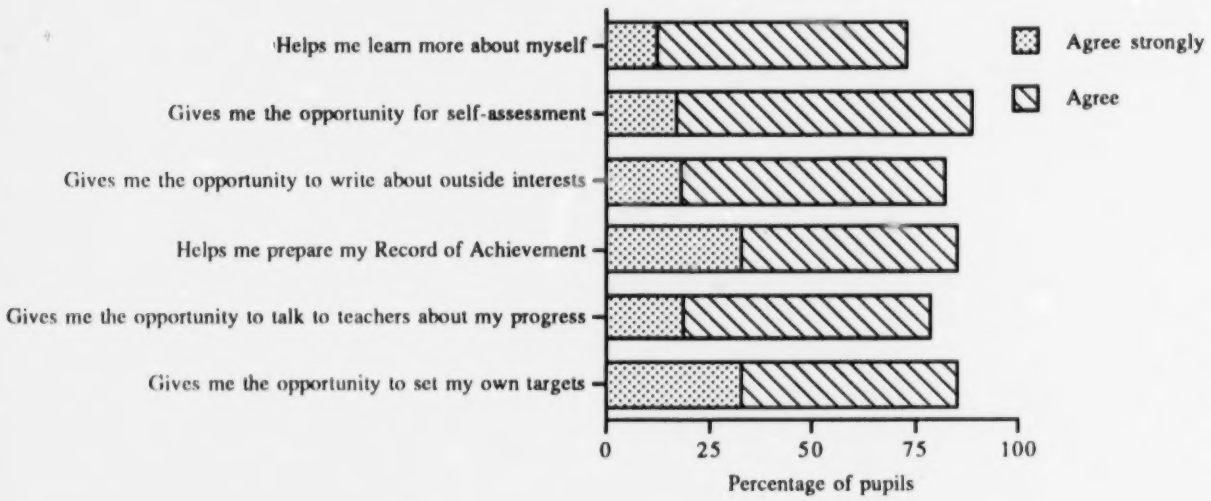
More than half of pupils thought that all the skills listed were useful in at least some subjects. Two skills, skimming and note taking, were thought to be useful in lots of subjects by about three-quarters of pupils.

Those skills which were highlighted by the majority of pupils as being useful in lots of subjects (skimming, scanning, note taking and using keywords) were taught by about three-quarters of teachers. Brainstorming which was seen as useful by smaller numbers of both teachers and pupils is perhaps only appropriate in certain subjects.

Records of Achievement (ROA)

The school began pupil profiling as a stage towards the completion of ROA three years before the start of our study. Every year group was involved in profiling and the system was also being extended to the upper years of primary school. Pupils were very positive about profiling with more than three-quarters of them agreeing with all but one statement. The results are illustrated in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Pupils who agreed about the benefits of profiling


Helps me learn more about myself
Gives me the opportunity for self-assessment
Gives me the opportunity to write about outside interests
Helps me prepare my Record of Achievement
Gives me the opportunity to talk to teachers about my progress
Gives me the opportunity to set my own targets
Agree strongly
Agree
0
25
50
75
100
Percentage of pupils

Preparation for the Record of Achievement began in earnest for S3 and S4 pupils with a series of lessons during PSD time which stimulated pupils' thinking about skills and qualities. Again there was an awareness from staff that these qualities and skills were being developed and practised in several different subjects.

Transferable skills

A list of relevant qualities and skills which might be referred to in the ROA was drawn up from a range of sources including TVEI, regional guidelines and employers. Rather than involve every member of staff in another audit, the senior teacher responsible for ROA discussed the list with the principal teacher from each department. In this way a matrix of skills by subject was completed. The 'transferable' skills identified were:

- communication skills;
- problem solving;
- ability to think creatively;
- modern languages;
- musical skills;
- dexterity and co-ordination;
- numeracy;
- information Technology.

- Personal Skills:
  - relationships with others;
  - ability to cope under pressure;
  - use of initiative;
  - commitment to improvement.

By the time subheadings had been added to expand the core skills, the final matrix numbered over 70 skills and 29 different courses. There was no suggestion that in its present form it could be assimilated by staff or pupils. There were however a number of interesting plans being discussed to make use of the information:

> *I have been working with [others] on taking some of these skills and preparing definitions. We got these blown up into posters and they are hopefully going to go into all rooms next session.*

and

> *I've spoken to the computing teacher and it would be possible to take each individual pupil, pick out their seven subjects and give them an individual skills audit. We did it with one just to look and it was possible.*

As part of the induction process for pupils at S5 and S6 which we referred to in the introduction to this vignette, workshops on transferable skills were planned. Posters relating to these skills were displayed in the room and pupils were asked to identify the skills they used in their subject options and to evaluate their own progress in relation to these skills. To show that the skills were transferable beyond the confines of their every day school work, pupils were also asked to consider the skills they had used during the three day induction sessions and to identify any skill 'gaps' as part of their target setting exercise for entry to the senior school.

Responsibility for ROA

Senior staff in the school believed that it was important for pupils to take the maximum responsibility for gathering evidence for their ROA and for its final production. There was a feeling that given the amount of time spent on specific ROA lessons in the early years, pupils in S4 - S6 did not need classroom time to gather evidence. They did need time and resources to create the final product:

> *I am anxious that they do that themselves. What we are struggling with is to find suitable hardware and software which will allow them to do drafts and final records.*

From our questionnaire to pupils we know that 75% of pupils thought that they were responsible for all or most of what went into their ROA (this is a significantly higher figure than the national survey). During our discussions with older pupils they explained that they had been given time during examination leave to use a computer programme especially prepared for the format of the record. Those we spoke to were pleased with the appearance of the final product and very positive about the idea of a Record of Achievement. They believed that it would be a useful source of discussion with employers during interviews.

■ Links between information skills and ROA

Reference was made earlier to the links between information skills and core or 'transferable' skills for the ROA. There was a recognition that this link was not as clear as it might be. At the time we visited the school, pupils knew something

about information skills which were highlighted on posters but they were not aware of any links between these skills and the ROA nor had they, as yet, heard of 'transferable' skills. As a step to clarifying the overlap between the two, new posters were being prepared as a result of discussions about the ROA with principal teachers. These posters are headed 'Transferable skills' and are also marked as 'SKILLS HELP for ROA/Study/Information'. The intention is that these posters can be 'personalised' for different subjects.

Our discussions with senior management in the school made it clear that the main purpose of the skill identification audits was to support learning. There is a possibility that the proliferation of skills has made it difficult to see the wood for the trees. A danger, recognised by some of the staff, is that information skills could be taught and used in isolation and that the purpose behind these skills could be lost:

> *Skills are relatively mechanistic and can be taught individually. The need is to bring several skills together as part of the learning cycle.*

As part of the questionnaire, teachers were invited to comment on the benefits or disadvantages of the initiatives relating to 'information skills' or 'transferable skills'.

About half of the teachers chose to comment and those who did so were very positive. This quotation from one teacher seems to encompass most of what was said by the others:

Pupils	*increase in research skills*
	ability to work more independently
	ability to plan, organise and evaluate more effectively
Staff	*better sharing of ideas and good practice*
	fewer skills being over-taught or under-taught
	better whole-school knowledge of what is being taught, when and to whom

The 'whole-school' influence

In a school which sets great store by a whole- school approach to the development of skills, it is interesting to compare what the teachers of School A thought about several whole-school structures and practices compared with the national sample. The responses from School A are taken from the questionnaire and the respondents exclude members of the senior management team. The information from the national sample was completed by the TVEI school co-ordinators or appropriate members of senior management. What effect this is likely to have on the results is a matter for conjecture and caution should be used in making comparisons.

Table 2.3: Whole-school structure and practices which, to a great extent, encourage the development of skills (percentage of respondents)

	School A	National sample
Whole-school position papers	50	7
School Development Plan	45	7
School audit of skills	25	11
Staff Development (on skills)	28	20
Supportive senior management	66	-

Note that questions about supportive senior management were omitted from the national survey questionnaire. The difference between the two sets of figures is striking and seems to suggest that a whole-school approach is a reality in this school. The opinion of two-thirds of staff that supportive senior management is a major factor was reflected in some of the comments from the staff we interviewed:

> *That's for me the most significant factor that they [senior management] have backed the work done one hundred percent. I would say [member of senior management] knows right down to these sheets what we're doing in each subject area... having that back up is crucial.*

The 'TVEI' skills

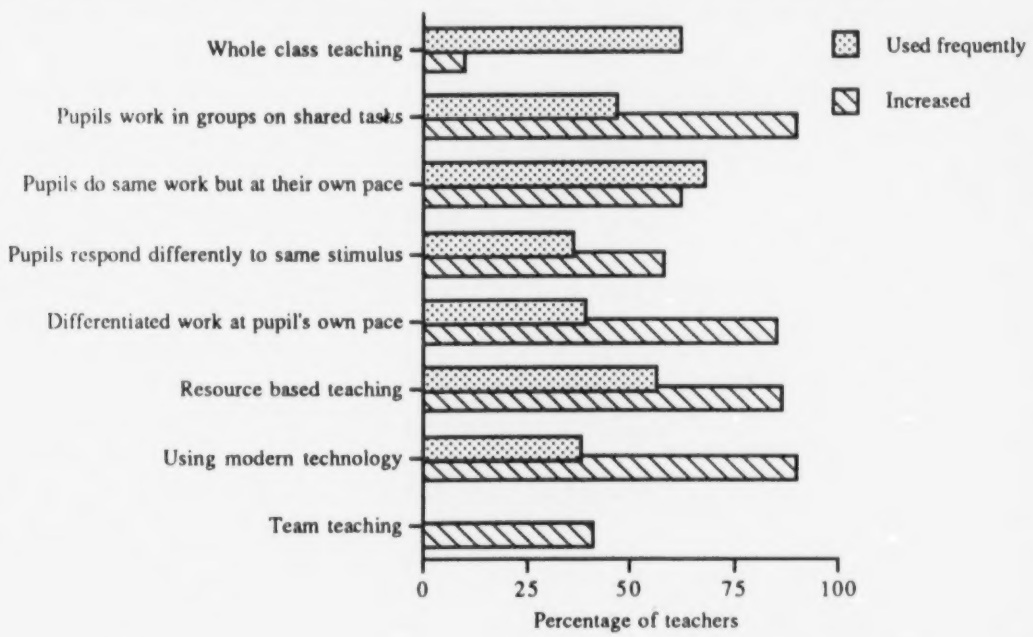
We had of course our own agenda to follow in each of the vignette schools and this was to determine the extent to which the school initiatives had enhanced the development of yet another list of skills - the 'TVEI' skills. Information on these skills was gathered from both staff and pupils using discussions in school and responses to the questionnaires.

In addition to responding to questions about specific initiatives of School A, teachers were also asked a series of questions drawn from the national survey. These included questions about teaching methods, responsibilities for teaching skills and changes in pupil competence. Where appropriate, similar questions were asked of pupils.

Teaching methods

Figure 2.4 shows those methods which teachers claimed were used frequently together with those methods which have increased in recent years.

Figure 2.4: Teachers' claims about the methods they use and how these have changed



The only methods which some teachers thought had decreased were whole-class teaching (69% of teachers) and team teaching (21% of teachers). Even with the decrease in whole-class teaching it was still used frequently by more than one-half of teachers. Other methods used frequently by the majority of teachers were pupils working at their own pace and resource-based teaching. Increases noted by more than three-quarters of staff were using modern technology, group work, resource-based learning and differentiated work. The last three of these methods are usually considered to encourage many of the skills in which we were interested.

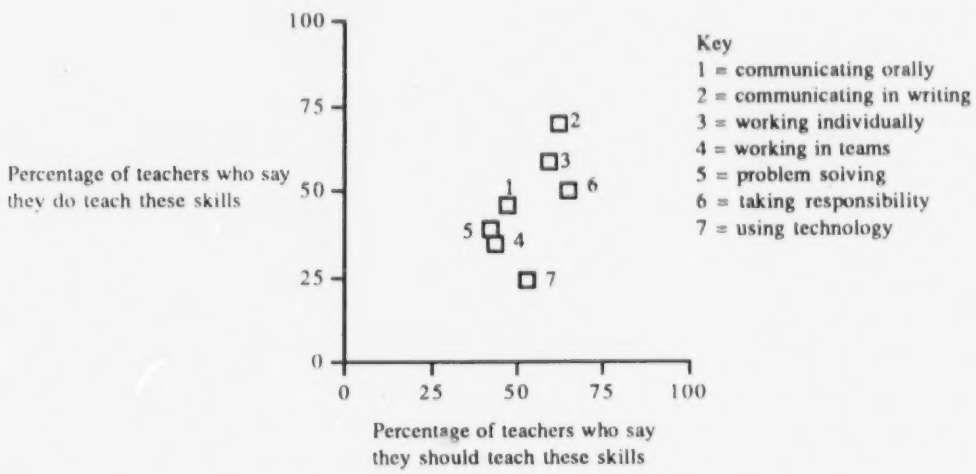
Teachers were asked to suggest reasons why teaching methods might have changed. Increased access to technology was mentioned by the largest number of teachers followed by new courses and in-school initiatives:

> *The amount of computers now in school allows greater numbers of pupils the chance to enhance their skills and presentation.*
>
> *New developments e.g. Standard Grade, Revised Higher, 5-14, bring a practical approach to the subject.*
>
> *Professional awareness has been raised significantly through quality in-service and involvement in in-house working groups.*

Responsibility for teaching 'TVEI' skills

Figure 2.5 compares the numbers of teachers who say they do teach a range of skills with those who think they should teach them.

Figure 2.5: Whether teachers should or do teach certain skills

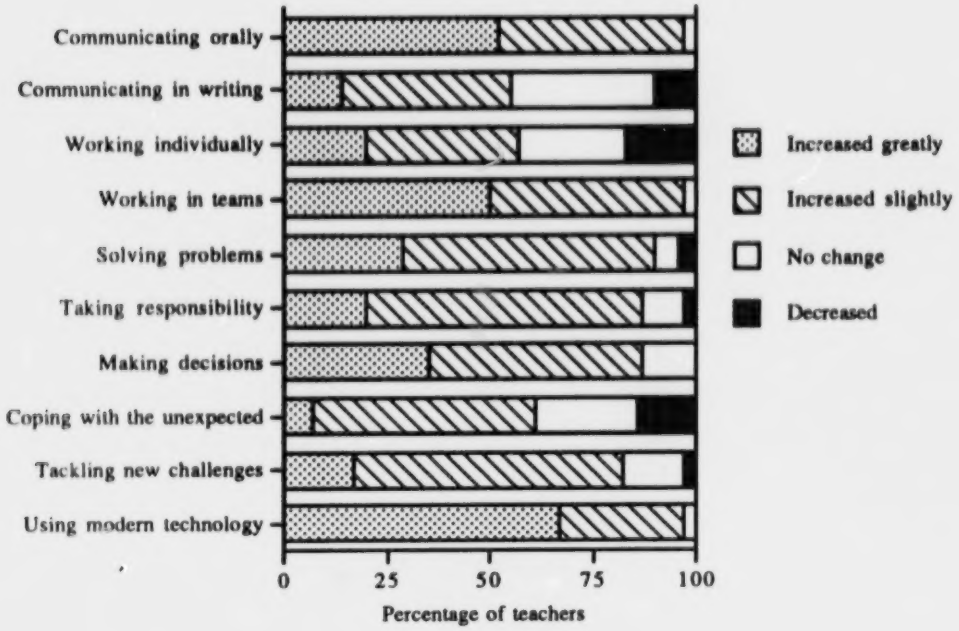


For School A the relationship is close. The same proportion of teachers who think they should be teaching a skill believe that they are doing so. The greatest discrepancy is in teaching pupils to use technology. Over half of the teachers think they should teach this skill, while only about one-quarter say they do.

Changes in pupil competence in skills

Teachers were also asked to consider if they had noticed any changes in pupil competences in recent years. Figure 2.6 provides a comprehensive illustration of their views.

Figure 2.6: Teachers' views on how pupil competence has changed



Almost all teachers thought that the ability to communicate orally, to work in teams and to use technology had increased. Several other skills related to problem solving, taking responsibility and enterprise were also thought to have increased by more than three-quarters of teachers. The pattern of increases was almost identical to those noted in the responses to the national survey.

When teachers were asked to say what factors might have caused changes in pupils' competence, the following were suggested (in order of frequency):

- technology (8 teachers);

  Improved access to resources and technology

- new courses (8 teachers);

  Standard Grade/5-14... Purposes more clearly defined from criteria

- the deliberate teaching of skills (6 teachers).

  The actual teaching of information skills rather than assuming pupils know how to investigate or cope with the learning cycle

One teacher added a note of caution pointing out that an increase in one skill could be a factor for a decrease in another skill:

More group work seems to have a detrimental effect on working individually.

Pupils' understanding of 'TVEI' skills

In our discussions with pupils we showed them a list of the transferable skills in which we were interested and asked pupils to tell us in which subjects they used these skills and to give examples of their use. All groups were able to think of a range of subjects which taught each of these skills. The list was of course dependent on the subjects taken by the groups to whom we were talking but was much more varied than those listed in the national survey where only the most

common responses are reported. Pupils were also good at suggesting examples of each skill from each of the subjects mentioned. Table 2.4 provides a selection of examples.

Table 2.4: A list of subjects with an accompanying example for each skill

Skill	Subject	Example
Oral communication	English	Debate
	PSD	Interview skills
Working on your own	English	Record of personal reading
	Music	Given a set of chords produce your own composition
Working in groups	Modern studies	Weigh up pros and cons
	Biology	Working in pairs for experiments
Problem Solving	Computing	Write a program for a task, code it, run it and debug it
	OIS	Given information write a letter which includes it all

The groups found it difficult to decide on any priority in terms of importance within the range of skills being discussed. Almost all members of all groups intended to go on to higher or further education and considered the importance of the skills from this viewpoint. The two older groups settled for 'taking responsibility' because that covered them all:

> *You have to take the responsibility to get on on your own, to solve your own problems and to communicate with everyone.*

How easy are these skills for pupils?

As part of our analysis of the national survey we were able to group certain behaviours together as representative of broad skill factors (see Chapter 5 of the national survey for further details). Five such skill factors were identified; oral communication, working individually and in teams, problem solving (which included taking responsibility and enterprise) and using technology. Pupil answers on individual behaviours were then averaged to produce percentages for each skill. Table 2.5 shows how pupils who responded to the questionnaire in School A compared with the national figures.

Table 2. 5: Percentages of pupils who found these skills very easy

	School A	National sample
Communicating orally	35	26
Working individually	48	34
Working in teams	47	45
Solving problems, taking responsibility and enterprise	23	17
Using modern technology	51	35

Compared with the national sample the average score for School A pupils was substantially higher on most skills. When we looked at individual behaviours which made up these skills, pupils in School A were significantly more likely to

find the following very easy (the skill is bracketed beside each behaviour)

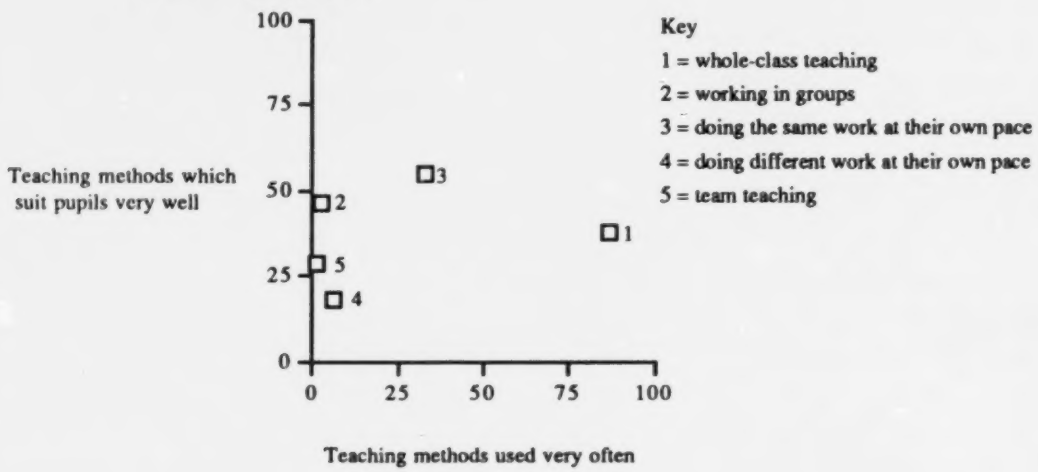
- take part in interviews (communicating orally);
- assess how well you are doing in your work (working individually);
- set your own targets (working individually);
- use sketches and diagrams (problem solving etc.);
- adapt ideas you already have for new situations (problem solving etc.);
- work with computers (using technology);
- find information from computers (using technology);
- know when computers would help (using technology);
- use a word processor (using technology).

Strangely, in view of the ease with which they apparently used modern technology, pupils in School A were less likely than the national sample to think that it was important for them to learn to use computers. Given the open access to a range of hardware which included laptop computers which could be taken home for homework, it may be that they took the ability to use computers very much for granted.

Evidence on teaching methods from the pupils' point of view

Pupils were asked in the questionnaire to say which teaching methods were normally used in school and which methods helped them learn. Figure 2.7 shows the relationship between methods which are used very often and methods which suit pupils very well.

Figure 2.7: Teaching methods used in class and those preferred by pupils (Percentage of pupils)



There does seem to be a mismatch between pupils' perceptions of teaching methods used very often and preferred learning styles. Nearly 90% of pupils thought that whole-class teaching was used very often although less than half thought that this method suited them very well. There is also a difference in perception about what is going on in the classroom. Half of the pupils said that they preferred to learn in groups but only very small numbers thought that group work was often used. By contrast half of teachers had indicated that they used

group work frequently and almost all thought that this method of teaching was on the increase (see Fig 2.4). It may be that the two groups interpreted the question differently but it may also be worthwhile for teachers to take an analytical view of a sample of lessons to determine the amount of time actually spent using different approaches. We know from previous research that teachers' reported methods of teaching do not always match observed methods of teaching (Black,H, Malcolm, H, Blair, A, Latta, J and Zaklukiewicz, S *Changing Teaching, Changing Learning*, Employment Department, 1991).

Responsibilities given to pupils

A range of ways in which pupils could demonstrate their ability to take responsibility was included in the questionnaire. Pupils in School A were significantly more likely than pupils nationally to say that they found it easy to set their own targets and to assess their own work. They were also more likely to say that they were often given the opportunity to choose what to study and to organise their own homework time-table and that the school was excellent for helping them to learn to make their own decisions. We have also noted above in relation to Records of Achievement that they were more likely to believe that all or most of what went into their ROA was their own choice.

During our discussions with groups of pupils, we asked them what kind of responsibilities they were given in school. All groups referred to the work of the Schools Council as a way of being given responsibility. Each class had a representative who gathered information from the class on matters of concern and which were then passed to the year representatives on the School Council. Pupils explained that they 'talked about changes which the school community considers desirable'. The older pupils felt that they had some real influence in the school and that among their successes were new seating areas throughout the school and cleaner toilets. All groups raised what was obviously the big topic of the time - the unattractive and 'demeaning' PE kit for girls. The subject was one which had still not been resolved although the girls had visited local shops with a member of staff to try to choose a new kit. No agreement had been reached by the time of our visit although the older girls felt that they had got a fair hearing, that staff were sympathetic and that a solution which suited both might still be found. Older pupils also referred to a range of charity work for which they were responsible. They decided on which charities to sponsor and how to raise the money.

■ The impact of school initiatives

In each of the vignette schools we set out to find out more about particular practices which were designed to improve the development of transferable skills. In this school the emphasis was on a whole-school approach to the teaching of skills as a way of supporting learning across the curriculum.

In their comments during discussions and in the questionnaire, teachers were very positive about the information skills initiative. Half of the teachers in the sample believed that school position papers and the School Development Plan had encouraged the development of 'TVEI' skills to a great extent. An even higher proportion (two-thirds of the sample) believed that a supportive senior management had also greatly encouraged this development.

Our only reservation about the school's approach to skill development was in the proliferation of skills which had been identified under several different headings. A tremendous amount of work had gone into the audit of skills for both information skills and transferable skills. There is evidence to suggest that many staff have taken on board the need to teach the information skills and can see the benefits already. The school is already well aware of the danger of superimposing a second layer of skills and is actively involved in clarifying the situation for both staff and pupils.

Another area of possible concern is the apparent discrepancy between pupils' and teachers' perceptions of teaching methods used in the classroom. Teachers' perceptions are that they are increasingly using methods which are more likely to foster a range of skills. This perception is not shared by pupils.

For evidence about the impact of the school's initiatives on the development of skills we looked mainly to the questionnaires from staff and pupils. Where possible we compared pupils' responses with national figures.

Given the importance of the resource base as a centre for research and reference and the array of technological hardware available it is not surprising that pupils, when compared with the national figures, were significantly more likely to feel at ease on a range of measures related to information technology. This was also one of the areas in which nearly all teachers noted an increase in competence.

Other areas such as oral communication, working in teams and problem solving were also highlighted by most teachers as having increased. The evidence here was not so clear cut although pupils were more likely to find a few isolated behaviours within these skills very easy compared with the national sample.

Both in our discussions with pupils and in responses to the questionnaire, taking responsibility was highlighted as a very important skill. More than three-quarters of staff claimed that pupil competence in this area had increased. Evidence from the questionnaire showed that pupils in School A were more likely than those in the national sample to choose all or most of what went into their ROA. A larger percentage of them thought that they often had a choice of what to study and to organise their own homework time-table. More of them found it easier to set their own targets and assess how well they were doing. Further corroboration from senior pupils was gathered during our discussions in school. Pupils' perceptions were that they did have responsibilities in several areas and they felt that their opinions were respected - even if they did not always get their way.

Our conclusions must be that the whole-school audit of skills has been successful in making pupils aware of a range of information skills and in providing them with relevant opportunities to practise these skills. It also appears to have been successful in ensuring that the teaching of these skills is shared amongst those teachers who believe that the skills are important. From the perceptions of teachers and from the degree of comfort reported by pupils, the school has succeeded in introducing and developing the whole range of 'TVEI' skills particularly those of oral communication, working individually, taking responsibility and using technology.

3 PSD for senior pupils

'Punctuality and good attendance, co-operation with staff in House and Tutor Group activities, service to younger pupils and to the community, and willingness to be committed to 'responsibility education' in all its breadth and variety - all these requirements are part of the educational contract which you are invited to make with the school.' This statement forms part of the foreword to the Senior School Handbook produced by School B. The school expects senior pupils to contribute to the life and work of the school to the fullest possible extent and to this end gives them a number of responsibilities. At the same time it is realised that senior pupils' own needs should also be met. One way in which the school meets this obligation is to provide a Personal and Social Development (PSD) programme for all S5 and S6 pupils. The focus of this study is the experience of senior pupils in this school, with particular emphasis on the responsibilities they are given and the PSD course they receive.

School B is non-denominational and is located in a small town just outside a large urban area. It has over 800 pupils and 75 staff. Two researchers visited the school in September 1993 and talked to a small number of key staff and to groups of pupils from S5 and S6. Following these visits, pupils from S3 to S6 were asked to complete the same questionnaire as used in the national survey, with additional questions being asked of senior pupils. A number of staff in the school also completed a questionnaire, which included questions specific to the school. Where possible, comparisons are drawn between School B and the results of the national survey.

Characteristics of the sample

One hundred pupils completed questionnaires, 25 each from S3, S4, S5 and S6. Slightly more than half (57%) were girls and 74% of all pupils hoped to get a degree. This was a much higher proportion than the national sample where 51% were planning to go to university or college to get a degree. The questionnaire for teachers was completed by 25 members of staff, 5 male and 20 female. This is one-third of the total number of staff in the school, so some caution must be used in generalising from the responses they gave. The teachers held a range of posts within the school and the majority had more than eight years experience. They came from nine subject areas and in addition to their main subject, five taught PSD to S3 or above.

■ Personal and Social Development

What does PSD for senior pupils comprise?

PSD in the senior school builds on that which pupils have already experienced in S3 and S4. In S5 and S6 one afternoon per week is set aside for PSD and it is part of the core curriculum for all pupils. The programme for senior pupils focuses on the skills of taking responsibility, working in teams and communicating. In S5 the programme includes:

- social education - relationships, contraception, AIDS, equal opportunities;
- year planning and target setting;
- examination preparation and study skills;
- education/industry links - career investigation including five afternoons of vocational experience and mock interviews;
- record of Achievement preparation.

The main aim of the S5 programme, according to the handbook for senior pupils, is 'to assist pupils to understand the wide variety of choices and decisions that await them when they are about to leave school.'

The S6 programme begins with an industry-sponsored conference for pupils from several neighbouring schools at which there are speakers, team activities and opportunities for personal target setting. All 6th year pupils are encouraged to organise work shadowing experience for one week. Other parts of the programme include preparation of the Record of Achievement, guest speakers on current issues and various optional courses. The handbook states, 'The course seeks to be more pupil-centred, inviting the fullest participation in course planning and delivery.'

An important part of the senior pupils' PSD programme is the contact with employers which is offered to all S5 and S6 pupils and is timetabled within PSD. The teacher responsible for education - industry links and for vocational experience for S5 said in interview:

> *Anything that puts a student in contact with industry or commerce in any way is a vocational experience. For S5 I see this as days out in the workplace linked to a career or subjects they are interested in, mock interviews with people from industry and days when we have people from industry in to talk about the world of work.*

Around 90% of S5 pupils take up the opportunity of work visits. They fill in a card giving three or four examples of areas they are interested in as careers. A small group of pupils then visit an organisation for an afternoon. The EIL co-ordinator feels that pupils have much to gain:

> *Communication ... a sense of ownership and responsibility...there's also a feeling that they are being helped and people are interested in them as an individual and I think there's a lot in that.*

Work shadowing for all S6 pupils has been in place for five or six years as part of the school's internal programme. Pupils are not required to do work shadowing if they do not wish to but it is strongly encouraged. In the academic year during which this study was undertaken the SCOTVEC module in Work Shadowing was being offered for the first time and the take-up from S6 pupils was high, about 80%. Evaluation of work shadowing by employers has always been part of the programme; in addition, pupils write reports on their placement based on the learning outcomes and performance criteria in the module.

One of the main aims in the S6 work shadowing experience is for pupils to take responsibility for making their own arrangements. Unlike the S4 work experience which is very directed, 'in 6th year they are given a pack and told right, get on with it, negotiate your placement yourself.' Pupils generally arrange their own placements through personal contacts. The feasibility of this strategy may be largely due to the fact that the school is situated in a predominantly middle class area. Other schools may prefer a one door approach to lessen the possibility of

trying the patience of employers or some combination of these two extremes which allows pupils some degree of responsibility within a predetermined framework.

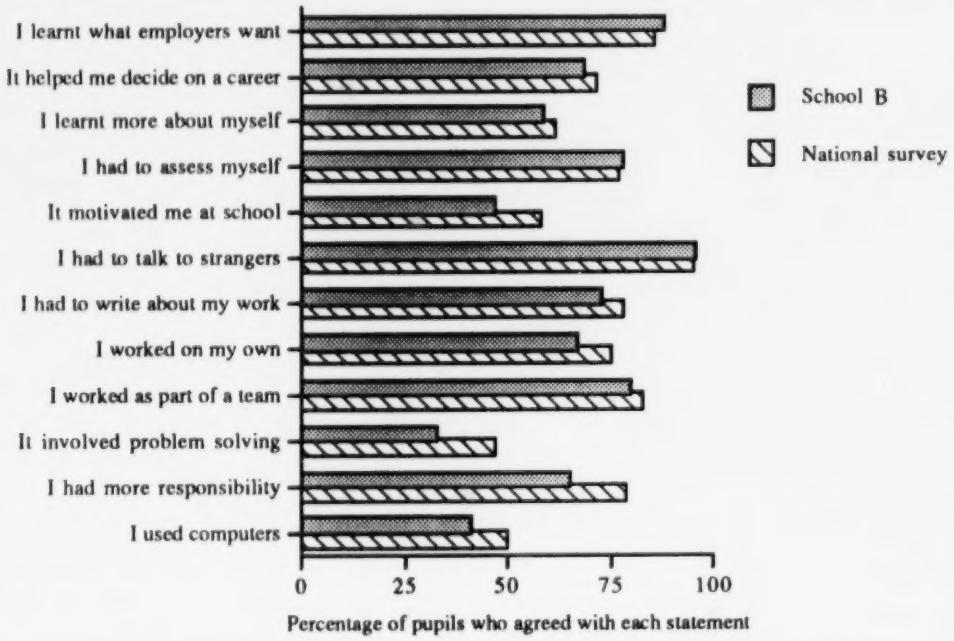
What are pupils' and teachers' views about PSD?

Interviews with S6 pupils showed that they were aware of the progression in their PSD as they moved up the school:

> *In the first three years it's mainly education about the world, telling you about things, informing you. From 4th year it's more about careers and what you're going to do when you leave school. In 4th year there's work experience, in 5th year EIL, 6th year work shadowing. In work experience you were spoon fed, there was a book with different institutions in and you just picked one. It was all done for you.... In 5th year you had to go to a certain teacher and say what you wanted to do and they would try and get it sorted out. It was more specific to what you wanted to do.... S6 work shadowing you had to organise completely by yourself.*

In the questionnaire pupils were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements about work experience. Almost all S5 and S6 pupils said they had been on work experience (96% and 100% respectively). Their responses were generally similar to those of the national sample and are shown in Figure 3.1.

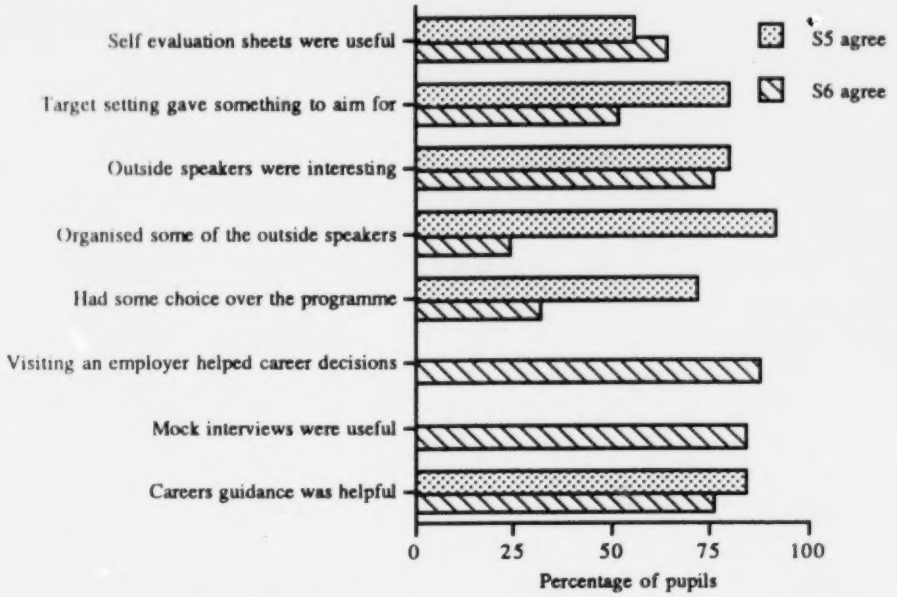
Figure 3.1: Pupils' opinions of work experience


I learnt what employers want
It helped me decide on a career
I learnt more about myself
I had to assess myself
It motivated me at school
I had to talk to strangers
I had to write about my work
I worked on my own
I worked as part of a team
It involved problem solving
I had more responsibility
I used computers
School B
National survey
0
25
50
75
100
Percentage of pupils who agreed with each statement

The only significant differences between pupils in School B and other schools were that School B pupils were less likely to feel they were given more responsibility than normal and less likely to say that their work experience had involved problem solving. The difference in responsibility may be because School B's responses were from senior pupils who may have felt that they already had a high degree of responsibility at school and were, therefore, less likely to feel that work experience had given them more than normal.

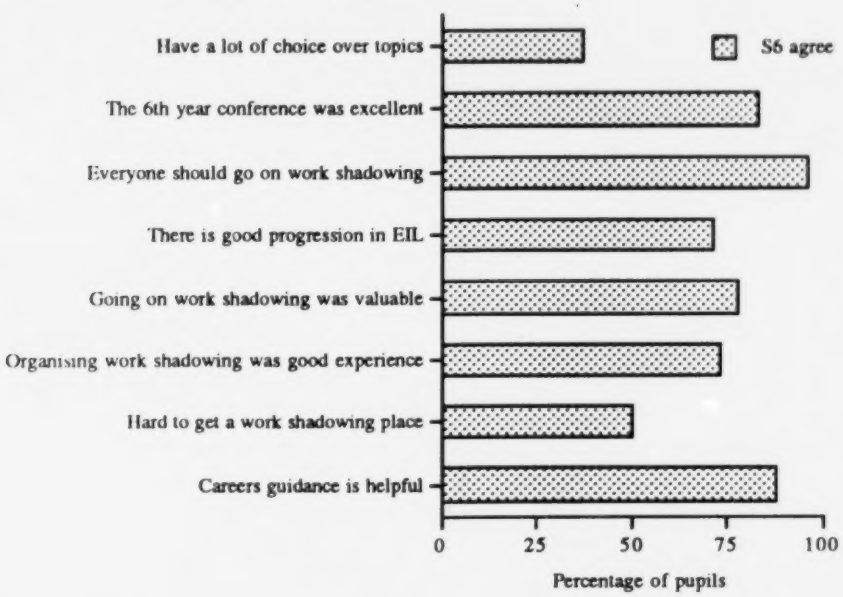
The questionnaires to S5 and S6 pupils asked about their impressions of the PSD programme. S5 pupils, who at the time of the survey had not yet taken part in all activities, were generally positive about their experiences. S6 pupils looking back at the previous year were somewhat less positive, especially regarding the element of choice and the opportunities to organise outside speakers (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: The benefits of S5 programme for PSD



In interview, S6 pupils said that each group had planned to organise one PSD session but in practice only a few groups had succeeded in this. Overall, a quarter of S6 pupils said that their S5 PSD had been good and a further 60% that it had been 'average'. They were mainly positive about their present programme, although only a minority felt that they had a lot of choice (Figure 3.3).

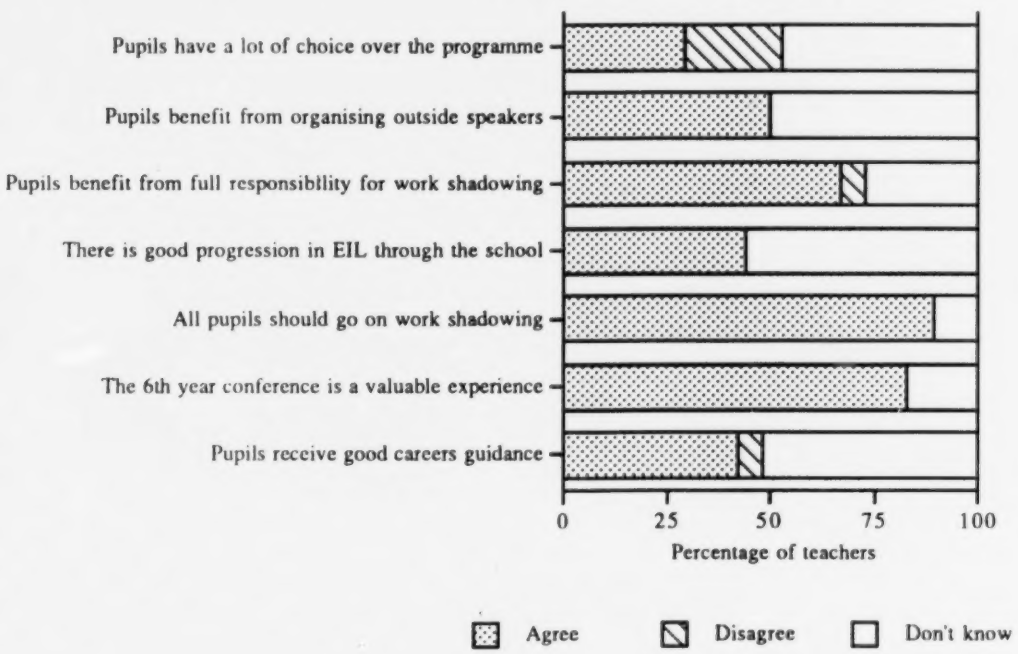
Figure 3.3: The benefits of S6 programme for PSD



The course may not yet be fulfilling its aim of inviting full pupil participation in planning and delivery. Although most S6 pupils agreed that organising their own work shadowing was a valuable experience, half had found it difficult to arrange a suitable placement. During discussions, pupils said that some of their peers had written to a large number of companies without success; in some cases this was because the company dealt with confidential documents and was unwilling to offer placements to school pupils, in other cases it was because another pupil had secured the placement first. The advantages of allowing pupils to have the freedom to make their own plans would have to be weighed carefully against possible disadvantages of frustration for pupils and increased work load for employers. It may be that some compromise approach would have the advantage of lessening the frustration without jeopardising the school's concern to give as much responsibility as possible to the individual pupil (see Fig 3.4 below).

The majority of teachers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the 6th year conference was a valuable experience, that pupils benefited from organising their own work shadowing and that all pupils should have this opportunity (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Teachers' opinions on the benefits of the PSD programme for senior pupils


Pupils have a lot of choice over the programme
Pupils benefit from organising outside speakers
Pupils benefit from full responsibility for work shadowing
There is good progression in EIL through the school
All pupils should go on work shadowing
The 6th year conference is a valuable experience
Pupils receive good careers guidance
0
25
50
75
100
Percentage of teachers
Agree
Disagree
Don't know

A large proportion of teachers felt unable to express an opinion about pupils' career guidance, pupil organisation of outside speakers and the progression in EIL as pupils moved up the school. However, the only statement with which a number of teachers disagreed was that 'pupils have a lot of choice over the programme'. In this they were reflecting the views of the pupils. We have no evidence to indicate whether teachers felt that they themselves had much choice over the content of the senior pupils' programme. By the time account has been taken of national and local priorities in terms of, for example, health education

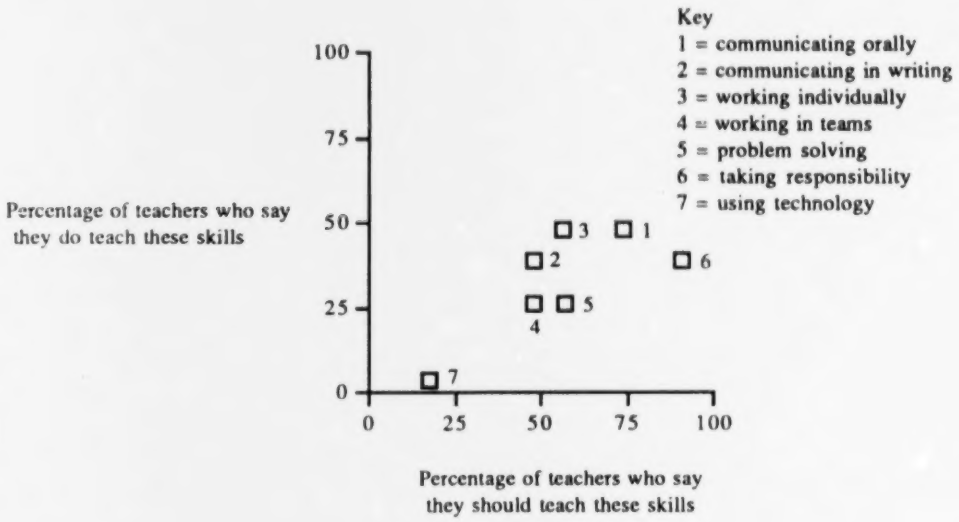
and career education, it may be that there is very little scope for choice. If this is the case then the situation has to be clarified for pupils. If there is more scope for choice than seems to be the case at present then it is a goal to plan for in the future.

'TVEI' skills

Responsibility for teaching 'TVEI' skills

In the questionnaires to teachers we asked about the extent to which they thought they should be teaching the skills of communicating, working individually and in teams, solving problems, taking responsibility and using modern technology. They were also asked if they actually did teach these skills. A majority of teachers felt that they should be teaching all these skills except 'using technology', which was perhaps seen as a more specialist field. Taking responsibility was seen as particularly important. A slightly smaller proportion but still a majority of staff felt that they were actually teaching such skills, at least to some extent. Figure 3.5 shows those who felt that they should teach such skills and those who felt that they taught them 'to a great extent'. There is a general trend for more teachers to think they should be teaching these skills than are actually teaching them.

Figure 3.5: Skills which teachers should and do teach

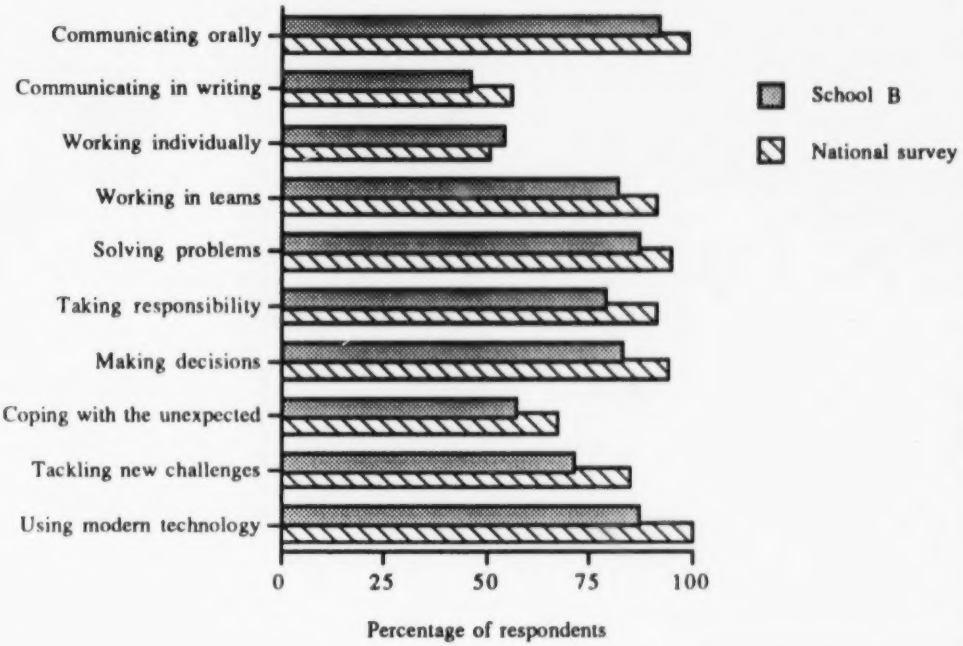


Changes in pupil competence

The majority of teachers felt that pupils' competence in the 'TVEI' skills had increased; oral communication was thought to have improved by the largest number of respondents and written communication by the fewest (Figure 3.6). Major causes of change suggested were flexible learning initiatives, Standard Grades, Revised Highers and staff development. Interestingly, the PSD programme was not specifically mentioned in this context. For some questions we have data both from School B and the national survey. In Figure 3.6 the data from the national survey are included and show the responses of TVEI school co-ordinators rather than subject teachers, caution must, therefore, be used in

interpreting any differences. It can be seen that their responses follow a similar pattern but they were generally slightly more optimistic than School B teachers with regard to increases in pupil competence.

Figure 3.6: Increases in pupil competence



Staff felt that whole-school practices which had encouraged the development of 'TVEI' skills in their pupils had been principally a whole-school policy on skills, the School Development Plan and staff development.

Do pupils find these skills easy?

Pupils were asked how comfortable they felt with a range of behaviours. In the analysis of the national survey data it was found that these behaviours grouped into certain 'factors' which were related to the 'TVEI' skills we were considering (for more details see Chapter 5 of the accompanying report of the national survey). Five such skill factors were identified: oral communication; working individually; working in teams; problem solving (which included taking responsibility and enterprise) and using technology. Pupil answers on the individual behaviours were then averaged to produce a percentage for each skill. Table 3.1 shows how senior pupils in School B compared with similar pupils in the national sample.

Table 3.1: Percentage of pupils who find these skills very easy

	S5/6 pupils in School B	S5/6 pupils in the national survey
Oral communication	33	28
Working individually	39	33
Working in teams	48	44
Problem solving	23	17
Using technology	29	36

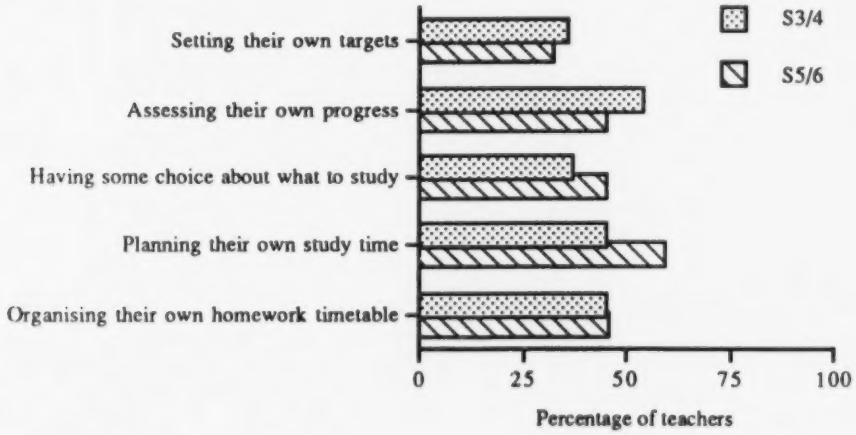
It can be seen that more S5/6 pupils in School B felt comfortable with the skills of oral communication, working individually, working in teams and problem solving but fewer felt confident using technology.

When asked about the importance of learning the 'TVEI' skills, pupils from School B showed only one difference from pupils in the national sample, which was that fewer felt it was important for them to be able to use technological skills. This reflects the feelings of teachers. Although most teachers felt they should be teaching all the 'TVEI' skills, 'using technology' was important to the smallest number of teachers. (Figure 3.5).

Responsibilities

In the questionnaire, staff were asked the extent to which they gave pupils various responsibilities in their subject classes, and a third to a half agreed that S3/4 and S5/6 pupils had at least some responsibility for setting their own targets, assessing their own progress, choosing what to study, planning their own study time and organising their own homework time-table (Figure 3.7). Not surprisingly, S5/6 pupils were thought to have more responsibility for planning their own study time and having some choice about what to study. The finding that S3/4 pupils were thought to have more responsibility for assessing their own progress and setting their own targets is more difficult to interpret given the school's focus on PSD for senior pupils. It may be that these are both areas of responsiblity which are stressed in S3 and S4 as part of the preparation for the Record of Achievement.

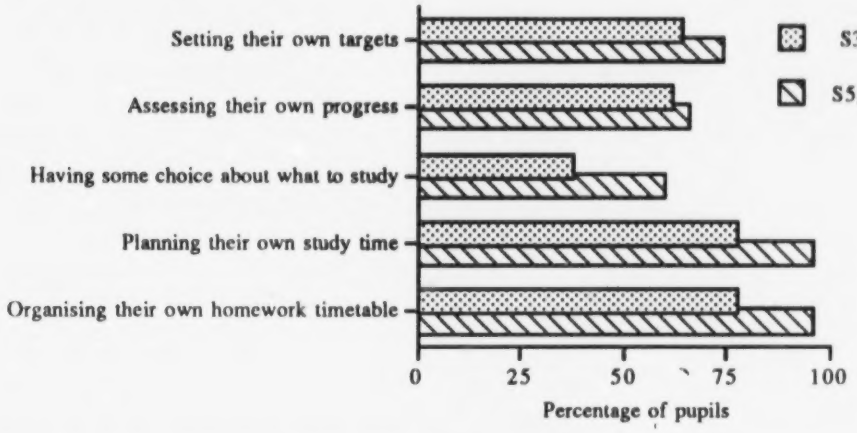
Figure 3.7 Responsibilities given to pupils to some extent (Teachers' views)



Numbers were too small to compare different subjects, but four out of the five PSD teachers did feel that their pupils had these responsibilities. The majority of members of staff felt that the amount of responsibility given to pupils had increased over the last few years. Pupils were generally more positive than teachers (Figure 3.8). S5/6 pupils felt they were given more responsibility in all areas than S3/4 pupils in contrast to the teachers' views. The responses are similar to those of pupils in the national survey regarding the responsibility to set targets, assess themselves and choose what to stud y but pupils in School B were

significantly more likely to feel that they had responsibility for planning their own study time and organising their own homework time-tables.

Figure 3.8: Responsibilities given to pupils quite often or more frequently (Pupils' views)



Additional responsibilities given to senior pupils

All pupils are given certain responsibilities in their subject classes, but senior pupils have additional responsibilities outwith their school work. All pupils in the school are allocated to a tutor group for registration and other activities. The school is unusual in that it has a vertical tutor group structure with pupils from every year in each tutor group. Tutor groups vote for 6th year representatives who attend meetings of one of the three house councils. Since there are only a small number of S6 pupils in each tutor group, many of them have a range of responsibilities such as reading out bulletins, organising events such as the Christmas carol concert and charity collections, as well as reporting back from the house councils. Older pupils are also expected to have some responsibility for the younger pupils within their tutor group.

Each of the three houses has, in addition to the tutor group representatives, a head boy and girl, a depute head boy and girl (all from S6) and four S5 representatives. The school also has a head boy and girl. The head boy and girl and the pupil heads of house are nominated by the 6th year and selected on the basis of interviews with senior staff. The head boy and girl and the house representatives meet with the headteacher, DHT and two AHTs every week during the first half of the pupils' PSD afternoon. Their role is to communicate with staff and members of the community on matters concerning the life and work of all pupils in the school.

We asked S5 and S6 pupils both during discussions and in the questionnaires what responsibilities they had and how they thought they gained by having these responsibilities. Some of the S5 and most of the S6 pupils who completed questionnaires had some sort of responsibility. Benefits most commonly mentioned were that it improved their skills of communication and organisation, that it made them feel part of a team, that it gave them informal contact with teachers and that it helped to prepare them for future employment. Others said that they felt they were giving something back to the school. A range of positive comments made by pupils in the questionnaire and in interview included:

I think I just felt that I had to take my turn and become responsible for everybody that's in my house because last year people did it for me.

It helps my communication skills and makes me feel more comfortable working and talking in groups.

It looks good for your CV!

You get a lot out of it ... Some of the meetings, they're done in a formal kind of way, it gives people good experience.

You get a say in what goes on.

The majority of staff felt that the responsibilities given to senior pupils were valuable and helped them develop skills and self-confidence:

Preparation for further education and later life – the need to make decisions and act on them.

Encourages leadership and initiative.

A few teachers felt that the system had disadvantages in that some pupils might find their responsibilities too great at their particular developmental stage or that pupils who were not given any responsibilities might feel a sense of failure.

■ Records of Achievement (ROA)

In 1992/93 all leavers from the school had compiled a ROA. Of the pupils who completed the questionnaire, all of S6 and virtually all of S5 said that they had a ROA. The majority of pupils (86%) who had a ROA said that they chose all or most of what went in it; this was a higher proportion than the national figure. The majority felt that ROA were useful for providing details of qualifications, achievement in school and out of school and a personal statement, but significantly fewer than the national sample felt they were useful for giving a previous employment history. Unlike School A, pupils did not do the final typing of their ROAs. Those who were interviewed were happy with this; they felt the office staff would do a more professional job!

■ Teaching methods

Teaching methods used most often by the teachers who completed the questionnaire were those where pupils worked in groups on shared tasks, pupils did the same work but at their own pace, and resource-based teaching, followed by whole-class teaching. More than three-quarters of the respondents claimed to use these methods 'frequently' or 'sometimes'. The method most frequently used by PSD teachers was group work. However, fewer pupils than in the national sample felt that they often worked in groups (45% compared to 60%) or did different work at their own pace (17% compared to 28%). Pupils were also less likely than those in the national sample to claim that doing different work at their own pace helped them to learn; perhaps because only a small proportion felt they had any experience of this teaching method.

Seventeen teachers (68%) stated that they had reduced their whole-class teaching; the largest increases had been in group work on shared tasks and resource-based teaching. These are both methods usually considered appropriate for developing some of the skills in which we were interested. The TVEI co-ordinator felt that in the school as a whole the largest increase had been in the use of modern technology as a teaching aid. The above changes were attributed to various factors, principally an increased emphasis on the need for differentiation,

flexible learning and changes in the curriculum including Standard Grade, Revised Highers and 5-14.

Summary

The main focus of this study was the school's provision of a Personal and Social Development (PSD) programme for all S5 and S6 pupils. The skills of communicating, working in teams and taking responsibility were emphasised. The S5 programme aimed to assist pupils to understand the wide variety of choices and decisions they are likely to face in the future. The S6 programme sought to be pupil-centred with high levels of pupil participation in course planning and delivery. An important part of the programme for both S5 and S6 was contact with employers.

We found that most pupils and teachers in School B were positive about the experiences of senior pupils in terms of the PSD they receive. Large majorities of both groups agreed on the benefits of S5 vocational experience, S6 work shadowing and the S6 conference, in particular. There does however appear to be scope for increasing pupil choice in the PSD programmes or for encouraging pupils to take more advantage of existing opportunities to make choices.

The majority of teachers felt that pupils' competence in the 'TVEI' skills had increased, particularly in oral communication. The teachers were less positive about increases in other skills than the national sample of TVEI school co-ordinators, although this could well have been because their pupils were starting from a higher base-line. Pupils were asked about their confidence in these skills. S5/6 pupils in School B felt more comfortable than S5/6 pupils in the national survey in all the skills except 'using technology'.

At least some S5 pupils and most S6 pupils had responsibilities related to tutor groups, house councils, organisation of school events and charity work. The most commonly perceived benefits reported by pupils were that accepting these responsibilities improved their communication and organisation skills and made them feel part of a team. This evidence from the pupils suggests that the PSD programme has been successful in meeting the aims of the programme as identified by staff and in developing many of the 'TVEI' skills.

4 Curriculum-led development of skills

Most would probably agree that the traditions and conventions of Scottish education in the final two years of compulsory education militate against substantial curriculum differences amongst Scottish schools. 'Certificates for all' has meant that since the introduction of Standard Grade there has been relatively little time to devote to other activities. In most schools a diet of seven or eight Standard Grades may be supplemented by a small number of short courses and modules which, as has been shown in some of the other case-studies, are often an important vehicle for the development of personal and transferable skills.

The situation in School C is no exception. Indeed, at first glance the curriculum appears more focused on 'certificate' work than many. With the exception of two periods per week of religious, moral and social education, students in S3/4 study **nine** Standard Grade subjects of which four are compulsory. It is the inclusion of social and vocational skills (SVS) and physical education as compulsory Standard Grade courses which adds a different dimension to the S3/4 experience in School C. The personal and transferable skills which are the focus of this study are embedded in these Standard Grade courses. The fact that these are certficated courses is an added bonus for pupils.

Situated in a town in south west Scotland, School C is a small non-denominational school with approximately 370 pupils and 35 staff. Two researchers visited the school in June 1993 and talked with ten members of staff representing a range of responsibilities and subjects. Following these visits, questionnaire data were collected from pupils in S3 - S6 and from a group of 12 teachers.

Characteristics of the sample

Of the teachers who completed the questionnaire, seven were male and five were female, the majority with over six years teaching experience. The teachers held a range of posts within the school and came from nine subject areas. In addition to their main subject, two had taught SVS in the past, but at the time of the survey were no longer involved. Of those we met during our visit, five were either currently or had previously been involved in the delivery of SVS. Including those teachers whom we interviewed, therefore, we were able to gather information from about half of the teaching staff.

Seventy-four pupils completed questionnaires, 53% female and 47% male. Just over half (57%) intended to leave school at the end of S6. Table 4.1 illustrates what these pupils hoped to do on leaving school compared with the national sample. The responses were similar, although fewer pupils in School C intended to go straight into a job.

Table 4.1: Pupils' aspirations

	School C	National sample
Go straight into a job	8%	18%
Go on a government training scheme	3%	3%
Get a degree	47%	51%
Go to college for other qualifications	26%	23%
Other	16%	5%

The skills curriculum

Subject-related work

A common theme which ran through our interviews with teachers in each of the schools studied was that the move towards Standard Grade had brought with it a shift towards a number of the personal and transferable skills on which this study is focused. The same view was held by teachers in School C:

> *The Standard Grade courses for me are very much about hands on, here's the problems, get going on it, make the mistakes and try again ... each of these [personal and transferable] skills is very much there, I believe that since the Standard Grade came in it has been directed towards these.*

One teacher interviewed claimed that in the last ten years pupils had become more likely to ask constructive questions about what they were doing and had become much more confident in discussion and debate:

> *I think the pupils have benefited greatly, they no longer sit back and just accept what they're being told, they do question what's happening in the politest way, they want to know at the end of the day 'why are they doing this?*

English is a good example of a subject in which staff see themselves as encouraging the development of most skills, although in interview the principal teacher did concede that problem solving 'was not so obvious'. Some skills, especially those associated with particular teaching methods can be said to be 'planned' into the course. These include skills associated with group work and working individually. Other skills such as 'taking responsibility' are not made explicit in the curriculum design but are implicit in such tasks as 'diary keeping', profiling and accumulating portfolios of work. Target setting was an example of a third set of skills characterised by being developed by particular units of work. One example was the way in which 'Novel Units' are approached. In the early stages of teaching this is built around a four-week planning sheet. Each pupil negotiates the content of this unit with the teacher. They are able to exercise a number of choices and each sets his or her own 'homework targets'. As the course progresses, the same basic approach is used although it becomes less structured as time progresses reflecting a desire to let the pupil take greater responsibility.

From the teaching perspective, time and experience have led to interesting changes. A good example of this is that originally the teachers returned each piece of work with a highly structured comment sheet attached. Experience proved that staff felt this to be restrictive. The principle of returning work with a comment sheet has been maintained, but the present system is now based on a completely open response by the teacher.

English was also a subject in which staff felt that they were able to use pupil skills which had been developed elsewhere in the school. Teachers have found

that almost all pupils now come to their classes with sufficient confidence in word processing for the skill to be taken as available for use in their classrooms. At the same time, English was making its own contribution to the development of such skills because each pupil is taught in S1/S2 how to use a video camera. This has proved to be a worthwhile skill which pupils have used in, for example, SVS and other Standard Grade assignments.

But what was most unusual about School C was the special focus given to skills in two areas of the curriculum, Standard Grade physical education and Standard Grade social and vocational skills.

Physical education (PE)

Preparation for Standard Grade physical education begins early at the end of S2. The subject is delivered in classes of approximately 15 pupils and is often managed in the form of two classes taught in parallel through team teaching. This allows an element of differentiation and the opportunity to use diagnostic procedures.

The principal teacher of PE is very committed to the notion of pupils knowing what is expected of them. Posters around the walls remind pupils of what they need to achieve:

> *One thing that motivates the children tremendously is knowing where they are going .. we always lay out exactly what is ahead of the pupil.*

In order to ensure this he developed a set of 'profiles' in the form of A4 sheets outlining targets with space for both pupil and teacher comments. Each curriculum component throughout the year has a set of targets attached to it. These targets relate to both practical performance and personal and transferable skills, for example 'attitude and behaviour' and 'helping and listening'. The personal targets for each curriculum component are set in relation to Standard Grade grade-related criteria. Pupils self-rate their targets at the beginning of each course component, and about half way through each unit, the teacher conducts a diagnostic assessment of progress, shares his or her ratings with individual pupils and indicates the next steps which will be necessary if pupils want to improve their performance. At the end of each unit a summative assessment is made of attainment in relation to each of the profile components for each pupil. In terms of skills development it appears that PE encourages pupils to take responsibility, set targets and perform self-assessment.

Social and vocational skills (SVS)

Standard Grade social and vocational skills had been adopted as an 'entitlement' in S3/4 to ensure that all pupils acquired a good grounding in 'life skills'. It is taught in classes of approximately 20 pupils; there are four parallel classes each with a 'dedicated' teacher plus a 'floating' teacher who can engage in a variety of tasks. The course is delivered mainly by guidance teachers although other 'volunteers' are recruited each year to make up the necessary numbers. The 'floating teacher' design was seen as being particularly useful to support the induction of new staff into the very different philosophy of teaching which is seen to be associated with SVS. The fact that there is a less precise 'content' curriculum than in other subjects means that there are fewer constraints:

> *The entire course is a very different type of teaching.*

The arrangement is to more or less accept the Standard Grade course design but to keep teaching methods as flexible as possible. The teachers we interviewed who had been involved in the delivery of SVS felt that the teaching methods adopted were very different to the approaches used in most other 'subject' classes:

> *[SVS units] are taught in School C in very open ways, it's a very open learning situation where we don't start with any real preconceived ideas.*

'Openness' was a key theme which the teacher responsible for the course returned to several times. An example was the degree of choice given to pupils in deciding the nature of the mini-companies they are asked to form as part of the SVS course. The object of each mini-company is to make a profit yet it is not unusual for the teachers to note mistakes being made along the way which will almost inevitably lead to the company making a loss. The teachers allow pupils to make their own mistakes as part of the learning process and help them to identify where and how these errors occurred as part of the review of company business.

An emphasis on the development of personal and transferable skills was seen to be very much more evident in the SVS course than in other subject areas by teachers we interviewed. All those who had been involved in SVS mentioned that the degree of freedom and choice granted to pupils gives them increased responsibility. An example of this is the residential stay which is organised by pupils for their whole year group:

> *They've got a vast responsibility not only because they've got to please staff and their parents but .. many pupils suffer greatly from peer group pressure and the peer group have got to be pleased as well and that really does make them feel very, very responsible and it does put a vast burden on them .. which isn't bad for them and it helps them to deal with these situations later on in life.*

■ Staff development

The staff development programme in School C is made up of a number of 'Staff Development Groups' each of which has four or five volunteer members plus a member of the senior staff. One of these groups, the Effective Teaching and Learning Group, was set up to enable teachers to find out what goes on in classes other than their own. Teachers pair up and choose the areas they wish to focus on. For example the principal teacher of PE developed packages of good practice related to his area of interest, target setting. These are kept in the staff base for other staff to refer to. The group encourages good practice, which appears to include the development of pupils' personal and transferable skills:

> *The whole thing about effective learning and teaching ... there's an emphasis on results .. the whole ethos of the school, trying to get the best out of the pupils, has to keep all these various things [personal and transferable skills] at the front of our mind.*

■ The ethos of the school

It was clear from our interviews that staff felt that the school had built an ethos which was supportive of the development of personal and transferable skills across the curriculum:

> *In this school ... from the moment they arrive ... they're put into teams and groups where they're asked to take responsibility throughout and the knock-on effect on that is evident.*

> *Working together, I think this is strong at the moment ... it's strong at [School C] anyway ... it goes beyond helping each other it's almost as if there's a common sense of purpose.*

The commitment of teachers at School C to the development of transferable skills can be illustrated outside the Standard Grade curricula. An example of this was a 'problem-solving day' organised the previous year for S1 pupils going into S2. One teacher explained:

> *We were trying to provide a fun activity, that's the first thing ... we were trying to build on skills as well.*

The idea had been taken from the television programme 'Crystal Maze'. Pupils were put into mixed ability groups which had to solve a number of problems located in different classrooms around the school. A number of departments were involved, each offering a different type of problem. This brought departments together and encouraged an exchange of ideas. Two of the teachers interviewed agreed that the day had been a success and that the pupils had enjoyed it, although they both acknowledged that it had been a lot of work.

The principal teacher of English felt that because School C is a small school, pupils and teachers have had to learn to work closely together. Pupils had come to develop the skill of finding things out for themselves and doing this responsibly. She felt that, for example, she could send pupils out of her class to undertake a task in the video unit and she knew it would happen. As a teacher new to the school she felt that the ethos of the school was relaxed but purposeful.

Several members of staff acknowledged, however, that despite the commitment of the school to the development of personal and transferable skills, there were still anomalies in the importance attached to them. In modern studies, for example, co-operation and negotiation are fundamental to community life, and are therefore central to the subject. A central part of the course is to give students real problems facing members of society, and ask how to solve them. However, there was no formal 'curriculum plan' for such skills and there is no 'assessable element' for their Standard Grade assessment.

■ Perceptions of the teachers

In the questionnaire teachers in School C were asked specifically about their perceptions of the SVS course, although it is important to bear in mind the small sample size (12 teachers). Like those in the national sample, pupils were asked to identify which subjects helped them to develop a number of different skills. This section combines data from both interviews and the questionnaire survey.

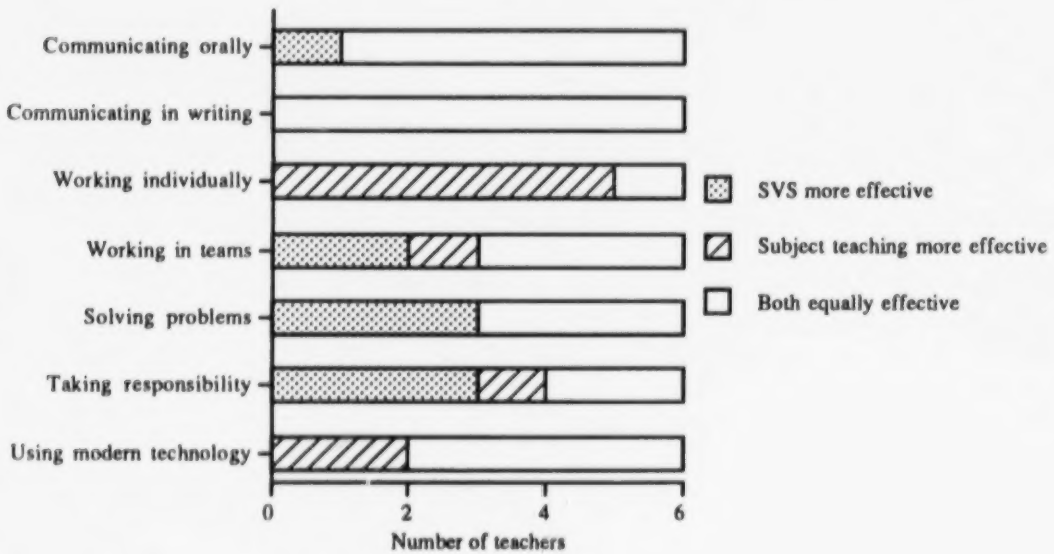
What were teachers views about SVS?

In the questionnaire, teachers were given the opportunity to comment on whether they felt that the teaching used in SVS was different to that employed in subject-based lessons. Three of the five teachers who responded to the question felt that the teaching used in SVS courses was different. Comments describing the difference included:

> *Pupils have to make greater use of planning for the real world, have to work together better and take on much more responsiblity.*
>
> *Giving pupils choice, responsibility, real situations, teamwork.*
>
> *Less structured. More pupil influenced.*

Six teachers responded to a question on whether, in their opinion, the teaching of transferable skills was more or less effective in SVS or 'subject'-based teaching. Their response was somewhat ambivalent (Figure 4.1). Subject teaching was clearly seen as more effective in nurturing skills associated with working individually. SVS was seen to have the advantage in taking responsibility, solving problems and working in teams. Written and oral communication skills along with using modern technology were felt to develop equally well in SVS and subject-based classrooms. These data need to be treated with some caution particularly because of the small numbers involved.

Figure 4.1: Teachers' views of the effectiveness of SVS and subject teaching at developing transferable skills



One teacher whom we interviewed, while enthusiastic about the SVS course in general, had some reservations about the effects on some pupils of too much freedom. He explained:

> *I wasn't totally happy with it all, there's an opportunity lets say for pupils to sit back and do very little ... when you have a mixed ability class then perhaps some of the individuals take on a great deal of responsibility and others sit back and let them do it.*

While responsibility was given considerable emphasis in our interviews, a number of other personal and transferable skills were seen to be very much part of the SVS course. For example, when pupils set up a mini-company they need to be aware of the skills of their fellow pupils and delegate jobs accordingly. Each 'job', for example the secretary or production manager, requires different skills and these need to be tapped:

> *These skills are already available from other departments, so we're pulling in skills which are taught in other departments.*

Skills acquired by pupils in SVS lessons can also be used in work on other subject areas. One teacher commented in interview that pupils are involved in a lot of project work as part of their Standard Grade courses, and that this should benefit from the responsibility they have had as pupils in an SVS class. In interview,

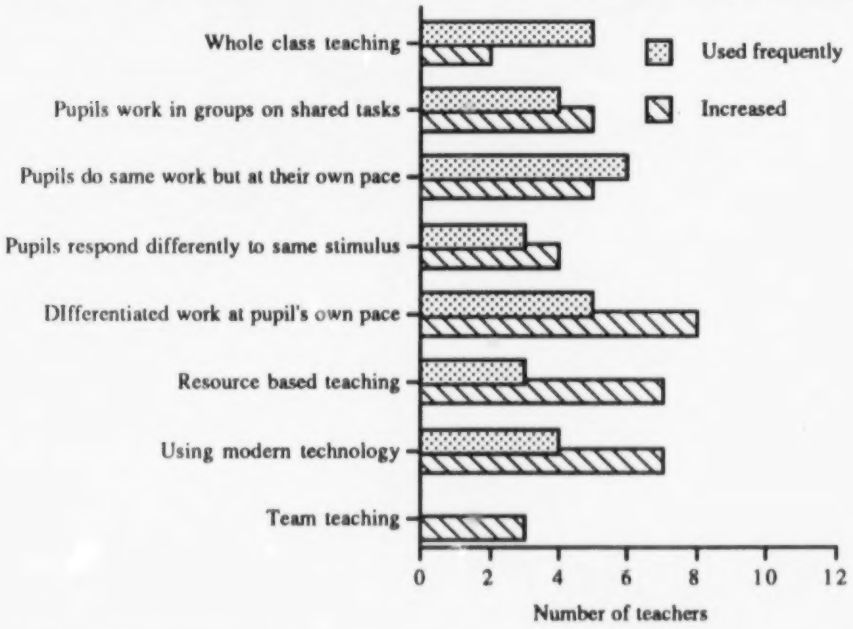
therefore, the overriding impression was that those who had been involved in the delivery of SVS were enthusiastic about the benefits it gave to pupils and the effects it had on other areas of the school curriculum:

> *I believe that in every school there is somebody wanting to do SVS .. I think the knock-on effects across the curriculum are tremendous .. the end product is the pupil is far more aware and questioning, and willing to question and accept, or willing to question and come back and question some more ... maybe that's part of what SVS is doing ... they are questioning, they want to know why they do this, what's in it for them, and what's in it for others ... that's valued.*

Teaching methods

As described above, Standard Grade courses were identified in interviews as an important factor responsible for an increased focus on the development of personal and transferable skills. Similarly, new courses were identified in the questionnaire survey as a major cause of changes in teaching approach. Figure 4.2 illustrates these changes, showing those methods which teachers claimed to be using frequently, alongside those methods which have increased in recent years. The majority claimed that there has been an increase in differentiated work, resource-based teaching and the use of modern technology. The first two of these are methods which are generally thought to encourage the development of personal and transferable skills.

Figure 4.2: Teachers' opinions on the methods they use and how they have changed



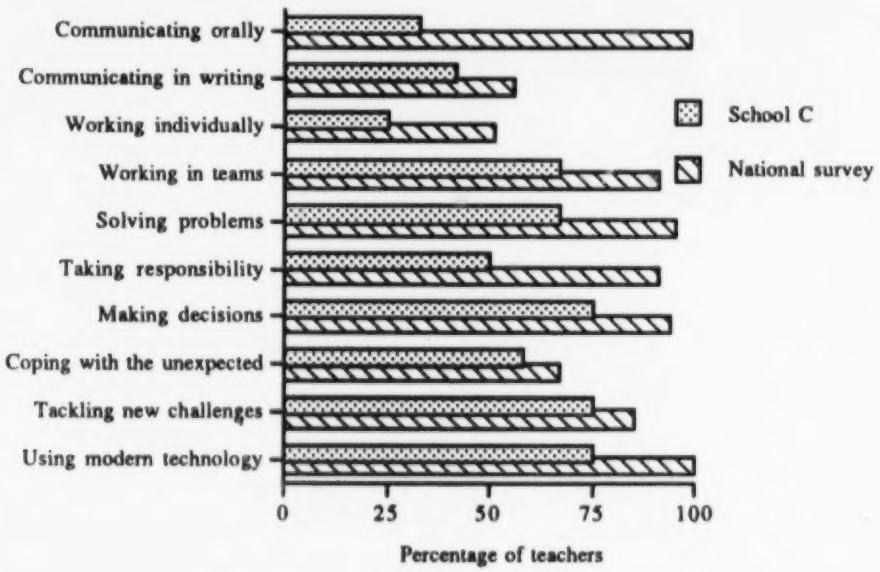
Do teachers feel that pupils' performance in skills has improved?

Teachers were asked whether they felt that in recent years there had been any change in pupil competence in various skills. Figure 4.3 illustrates the views of teachers in School C alongside the data from the national survey. In all areas, but in particular communicating orally and taking responsibility, a smaller proportion of teachers in School C than in the national sample considered that pupils competence had increased This is surprising given the emphasis on communication

and responsibility in the SVS course. It may be, however, that the development of such skills has been a priority for teachers in School C for some time and therefore their base line perception of competence in these skills is at a somewhat higher level.

Teachers were asked to suggest factors responsible for any changes and again the highest proportion of teachers mentioned new courses, with one teacher mentioning SVS in particular.

Figure 4.3: Teachers' views of increases in pupil competence



Perceptions of the pupils

The questionnaire completed by pupils in School C was identical to that sent to pupils in the national sample. It was therefore possible to compare directly the responses of the two samples.

Teaching methods

Pupils were asked about the teaching methods used normally in their classes and about those which they thought helped them to learn. Pupils in School C were significantly more likely than those in the national sample to say that they were involved in working in groups on shared tasks and that they spent time doing the same work but at their own pace.

Pupils at School C were asked to identify which subjects they thought were useful in helping them to develop the skills associated with communicating orally, working individually, working in teams, solving problems, self-assessment and using technology. Responses were to some extent determined by the proportions studying different subjects and given that SVS is compulsory in S3 and S4 it was not surprising to find that it was mentioned. However, it was interesting to discover that for four of these skills pupils in S3 and S4 most often identified SVS as helping with their development. The three most commonly mentioned subjects for each group, and the equivalent subjects from the national

sample, are listed in table 4.2. Interestingly, while teachers felt that subject-based teaching was more effective at encouraging pupils to work individually (see Figure 4.1) the majority of pupils were of the opinion that SVS helps them to develop this skill. Indeed, these results highlight that, at least in the minds of the pupils, SVS stands out clearly as addressing the development of personal and transferable skills.

Table 4.2: Subjects which help to develop skills

	S3/S4 pupils in School C	S3/S4 pupils in the national sample
Communicate orally	SVS (75%) modern lang (29%) English and PSD (27%)	English (54%) PSD (39%) modern lang (33%)
Work individually	SVS (60%) maths (29%) English and geography (19%)	English (35%) maths (32%) history (21%)
Work in teams	SVS (69%) PSD (42%) maths (33%)	English (51%) PSD (28%) PE (25%)
Solve problems	maths (79%) chemistry (33%) SVS (29%)	maths (74%) physics (22%) chemistry (18%)
Self-assessment (take responsibility)	SVS (52%) PSD (44%) English (29%)	PSD (41%) English (40%) maths (23%)
Use technology	computing (81%) physics (46%) business (35%)	computing (66%) business (39%) physics (23%)

Pupils were also given the opportunity to say how easy they felt individual skills to be. When considered separately, three significant differences were found between School C and the national figures. Pupils in School C were more likely to say that doing things without help, working on their own at homework and setting targets for future work were easy.

As part of the analysis of the national survey certain behaviours were grouped together to form five skill related factors - oral communication, working individually, working in teams, problem solving (which includes taking responsibility and enterprise) and using technology. A score from the responses of those pupils who found the behaviours 'very easy' was then computed for each factor, and School C's position in relation to the national sample is shown in Table 4.3 below.

The average scores for School C were very similar to the national scores, with slightly fewer finding the skills associated with teamwork very easy. This is perhaps surprising given that the pupils appear to be frequently involved in group work in their subject lessons, and are put into teams for SVS activities. It may be that the increased emphasis on such skills in these curricular areas means that School C pupils have a greater awareness of what the skills involve, and are therefore less likely to rate them as very easy.

Table 4.3: Percentage of pupils who find these skills very easy

	School C	National
Oral communication	26	26
Working individually	36	34
Working in teams	40	45
Problem solving	18	17
Using technology	34	35

Conclusion

The important issue for schools is the management of skills development and not necessarily the vehicle by which skill development is delivered. School C took an atypical approach in which individual subjects across the curriculum gave considerable emphasis to skills development. Amongst the examples we encountered was physical education which was not only unusual in being an 'entitlement' in S3/4 but also for the emphasis given to skills such as 'target setting'. The cross-curricular nature of skills development was also borne out in English. Here word processing skills were used widely because they were already part of pupils' repertoires; but English teachers also added to the skills available in the school by developing all pupils' abilities to use video equipment in S2. In Social and Vocational Skills the substantial emphasis on 'open' teaching methods and giving pupils greater responsibility was clearly seen by teachers as designed to develop personal and transferable skills.

Discussions with staff also suggested that the ethos of the school was supportive of the development of skills. Transition from S1 to S2 was marked by a 'problem-solving' day which involved teamwork to tackle challenges offered by a number of departments throughout the school. Giving pupils responsibility for decision making and expecting them to act responsibly in out of classroom learning activities pervaded many tasks described to us by staff. Yet surprisingly the school was unable to show us a 'curriculum plan' related to skills or to identify a school policy in the area nor were such skills highly visible in the formal assessment programme. The 'skills ethos' would therefore appear to have grown incrementally through teachers' positive reactions to a series of curriculum initiatives rather than by a deliberate 'top down' policy directive in this area.

What implications might this vignette study have for other schools? It has to be conceded that the 'formal curriculum' approach to skills development through an 'entitlement' social and vocational skills course is an unusual one. However, School C is interesting in that it has achieved this, along with 'entitlement' Standard Grade physical education without impact on the number of 'academic' Standard Grades available to pupils. Those staff who had been involved with the

social and vocational skills course were enthusiastic about its impact and there were no negative comments from pupils. School C has therefore adopted an approach to skills development which other schools may well have doubted to be feasible, and shown that it can be made to work. The loss may be in the flexibility of offering a time-table slot for 'modules' and other short courses. Whether this in turn results in a loss of flexibility is difficult to judge. The view of the school would probably be that even if some flexibility is lost, the advantage is that all pupils have a clear opportunity for the development of skills in the 'entitlement' curriculum which the evidence would suggest to be at least as effective as modular alternatives elsewhere.

5 Staff development as the key to the development of skills

Our reasons for selecting School D as a vignette were twofold. Firstly the school was involved in a major programme of different types of staff development which were intended directly and indirectly to enhance the ability of pupils on a range of skills. The courses included thinking skills and flexible learning. The other focus was on the school's Enterprise programme and how teachers perceived this as helping with the development of personal and transferable skills.

School D is a large non-denominational school of approximately 1,200 pupils in a town on the west coast of Scotland. Researchers visited the school over a period of a few days in June of 1993 and spoke to ten members of staff representing a range of responsibilities and subjects. Questionnaire data were also collected from pupils in S3, S4, S5 and S6 and from a group of 20 teachers.

Characteristics of the sample

Of the teachers who responded to our questionnaire, eleven were female and nine were male. The great majority had more than eight years teaching experience and included principal teachers, assistant principal teachers, senior teachers and class teachers from a total of ten subject areas. The teachers who responded to our requests for information all volunteered to do so and, including those whom we met during our visit to the school, formed about one-third of the teaching staff. This has, of course, implications for the extent to which any conclusions can be applied to the staff as a whole.

Responses to our questionnaire were received from a total of 77 pupils, 52% girls and 48% boys. The majority of pupils intend to leave school at the end of S6 (79%). Table 5.1 shows what these pupils hope to do on leaving school compared with our national sample.

Table 5.1: Pupils' aspirations

	School D	National sample
Go straight into a job	21%	18%
Go on a government training programme	1%	3%
Get a degree	49%	51%
Go to college for other qualifications	25%	23%
Other	4%	5%

On the basis of both gender and aspiration, pupils in School D were very similar to the national sample.

■ Staff development programmes

Thinking skills course

All members of staff had attended an in-school in-service to show them how to deliver a study and thinking skills course to pupils and to give them an understanding of what the course was all about. It is a structured course designed to encourage logical, creative and lateral thinking and contains exercises and activities which develop pupils' powers of observation, sequencing, problem solving and logical reasoning. Pupils are given the opportunity to work in teams and to work alone.

The course is taken by S1 and S2 pupils and is presented by form tutors as part of the life skills course. Although our main interest was in pupils from S3 to S6, staff believed that by delivering the thinking skills course in S1 and S2, pupils entered S3 with the advantage of already having been introduced to skills which would stand them in good stead in their Standard Grade courses. Some teachers felt the course was difficult for their classes but that it was very relevant to the skills in which we were most interested:

> *It was really meant to stretch them ... I think there were children who did benefit from it. It helped them with their problem solving areas, again they worked in teams and individually ... they were reporting back to me and others in the class what their group had found out and what they had done.*

According to teachers, pupil reaction was mixed 'sometimes they were really keen and at other times they didn't see where it was going .

The aim of a thinking skills course is to provide pupils with a range of strategies which they can then apply to other situations. There was at least a suggestion from some teachers interviewed and from the responses to the questionnaires that teachers did not make a point of building on the skills developed. Less than 20% of respondents who had been involved with thinking skills thought that their subject teaching had been influenced at least to some extent. Even where teachers had been involved in the course and were aware that they were using the same skills in their subject area they did not always make this explicit to the children:

> *What we were doing in the Somerset skills course was also being reinforced in our ... course. I don't think they were aware they were doing the same thing.*

and

> *I think if they're able to transfer it it's on a subconscious level*

Although all staff had been given an introduction to the thinking skills course, it may be that it is only when they are involved in actually working through the course with pupils that they can see where they could capitalise on some of its techniques by applying them explicitly to their own teaching areas. Unless this happens, useful techniques may remain isolated ways of working within the thinking skills course.

Flexible learning

About 18 months before the start of this study the school became involved in a divisional flexible learning initiative. Six members of staff attended a number of out-of-school courses which were designed to clarify the meaning of flexible learning, to look at different teaching styles as part of flexible learning and to explore methods of differentiation. From these beginnings a flexible learning

group (FLG) was set up in the school 'to produce a report on what flexible learning is, to try and take away some of the mystery'. As part of this report the group defined flexible learning as a method which depended on a number of circumstances being applied in the classroom including:

- a variety of teaching and learning approaches;
- teachers balancing formal teaching with the provision of appropriate support for individuals and sensitive tutoring for groups;
- pupils having some measure of choice over what is studied, the order it is studied in or how the topic is tackled;
- pupils using structured self-study material at their own pace and independently of the teachers;
- pupils being involved in open-ended activities such as problem-solving tasks or investigations;
- pupils being involved in working together as groups to carry out group tasks or to report back on work carried out individually;
- teachers managing the classroom in such a way that pupils can access and use learning resources themselves wherever possible;
- pupils being encouraged to set their own targets and to take some responsibility for their own and each other's assessment.

There was no suggestion that all these circumstances had to be present in order to be involved with flexible learning and one of the tasks of the flexible learning group was to identify pockets of flexible learning around the school to show that there was existing good practice there already.

One of the members of the FLG explained how his existing practice already matched some of the characteristics of flexible learning and how he was changing his practice to take account of other characteristics. Both examples reflected our concern with the 'TVEI' skills of communicating orally, working in groups and working individually:

> *I would say most of the work in English these days is group work, especially since the introduction of talk [in Standard Grade].*

and

> *Newer things are coming in .. supported self-study idea. I've just introduced a unit which would last for this term. It's a project ... they're given ten assignments. But in each assignment there is a wee note to say 'See information sheet 1' rather than the teacher standing up and explaining.*

The information sheets provide practice on skills such as skimming and scanning, examples of grammatical techniques and definitions of special terms such as purpose and register. Like all changes, teachers needed to be convinced that new ideas would work:

> *I must admit I was sceptical about the idea of self study. I saw it as a skive for the less motivated pupil. Probably can be. You have to keep an eye on things but it does let your better pupils go on.*

Teachers of music and science whom we spoke to both felt that flexible learning seemed to suit their courses.

> *It's just common sense in music. It's just putting down in words how you have been teaching for years. (music)*

> *I suppose when we first started it was more concentrating on student-centred resource-*

based learning. We use study guides in science and they're responsible for using the study guides, working through at their own pace using whatever resources we have available, textbooks, computers whatever. Flexible approach is where you could negotiate with pupils where they are going and how they're going about doing it rather than just letting them go away at their own pace. The flexible approach involves everything. (science)

The science teacher explained a bit more about how this negotiation worked:

I produced a questionnaire sheet to put to pupils. That was to get feedback from them to see what they thought of the course, the teaching methods and if they had any comments to make. In general their comments about the course and the way it was presented were favourable. The major criticism was about the standard, that they could have worked harder.

Staff development on flexible learning was at a fairly early stage but the intention was that all staff would participate in a series of in-school sessions which will allow them to work through assignments related to the philosophy of flexible learning. These assignments include review materials to help them to be more aware of their normal teaching and learning style and to analyse their lessons systematically.

Other staff development

One other staff development course was mentioned during our visits. A course had been held which focused on the prevention of disruption and indiscipline in the classroom. Our first impression was that this course had little to do with the development of the skills in which we were interested. However, several teachers with whom we spoke, talked of its value in enabling them to introduce more group work:

Group work has potential to be a real mess and chaotic but the course has helped this. I got confidence in my ability to know that either what I was doing was right or to find a different way of approaching it.

At least one teacher was appreciative of the range of staff development available:

One thing about this school, it is very good for staff development... there's a lot of support given.

Enterprise

Enterprise education has been a feature of School D for several years and has been funded by a series of successful TVEI bids. Priority is given to the development of:

- interpersonal and group skills;
- self-awareness;
- self-confidence;
- the ability to seek and use appropriate knowledge;
- planning and organisational skills.

Every pupil has experience of at least 18 hours of enterprise education in S3/4. Mini-companies and projects have been set up covering a wide variety of interests, for example, selling doughnuts, providing material for first and second year pupils to raise their awareness of green issues in the environment and preparing a French language pack for primary schools:

Enterprise is an area where pupils are becoming effective problem solvers.. they are

trying to overcome obstacles... the record in Enterprise in this school has been outstanding and nationally recognised.

When asked about the influence of enterprise education on 'TVEI' skills, those teachers to whom we spoke were very enthusiastic:

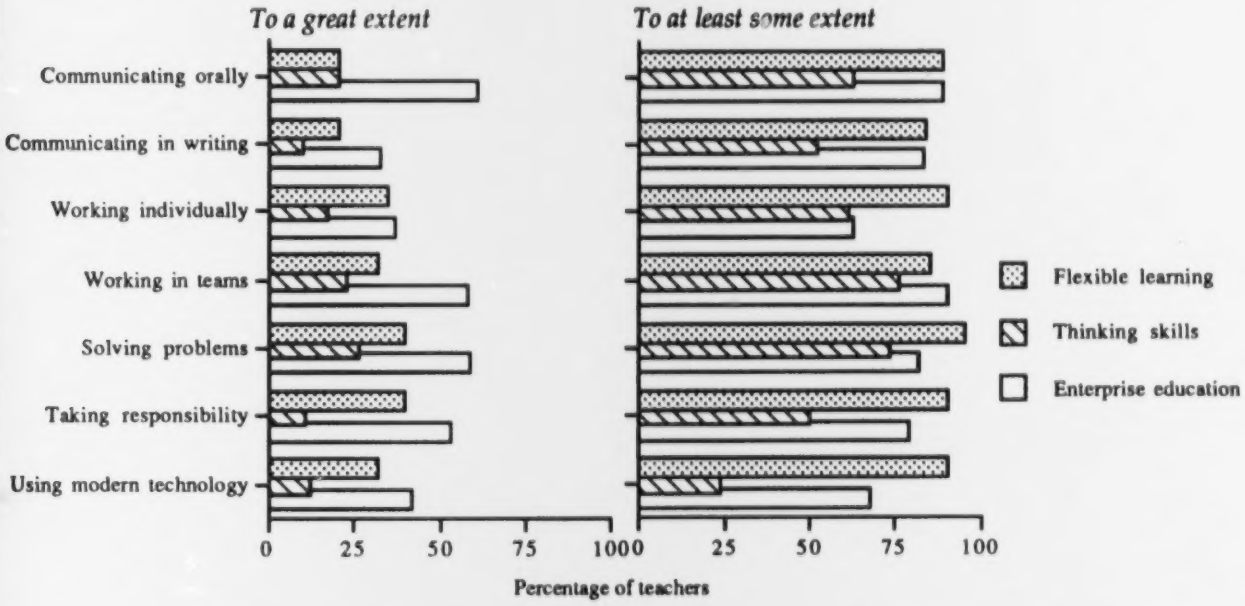
They use these skills very much so, the whole lot of them.

Team work would come out very strongly, problem solving, taking responsibility and communication, yes.

Influences on pupils

In the questionnaire, teachers were asked about their perceptions of the influence of different initiatives on the development of pupils' skills. Figure 5.1 illustrates the findings from those teachers who thought that each of the programmes influenced the development of skills.

Figure 5.1: The influence of different initiatives on the development of skills



For over half of the teachers who responded, enterprise education was believed to influence 'to a great extent' the development of oral communication, working in teams, solving problems and taking responsibility. The message is not so clear if responses 'to a great extent' were combined with the responses 'to some extent'. More teachers thought that flexible learning influenced each of the skills than enterprise with one exception - working in teams. This suggests that flexible learning is a more pervasive influence on a wide range of skills but that enterprise has particular strengths in certain areas.

Although the thinking skills course was selected as an influence by the least number of teachers for each of the skills, three-quarters of them believed that it had an effect on solving problems and working in teams - two of the primary aims of the course.

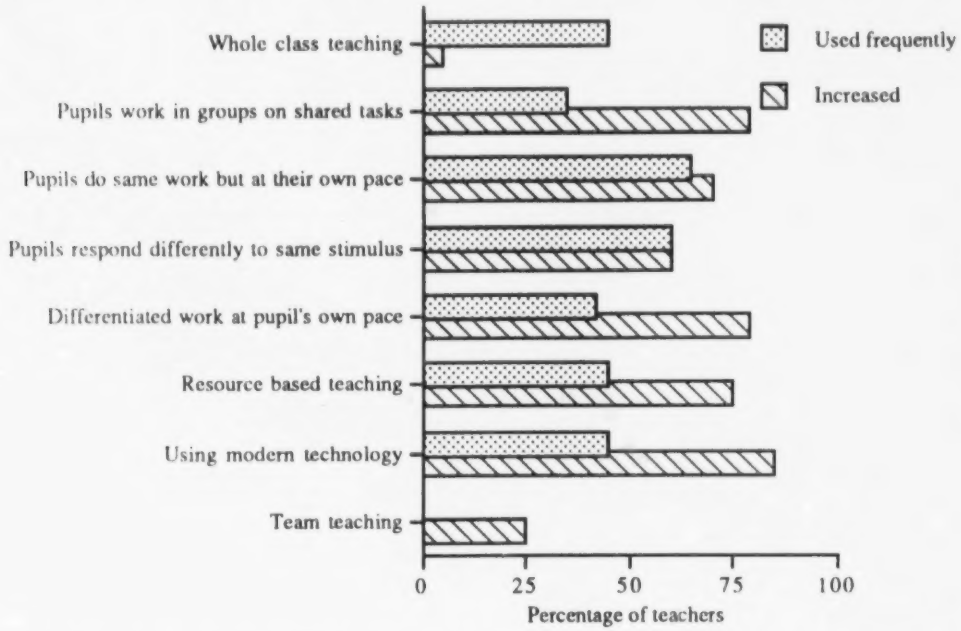
■ Questions from the national survey

As well as responding to questions which were focused particularly on the initiatives of School D, teachers were also asked a series of questions which matched those of the national survey. These included questions about teaching methods, responsibility for teaching skills and changes in pupil competence. Other questions more directly related to TVEI, included how they have benefited from TVEI and what their opinions are of the value of profiling and Records of Achievement. Where appropriate similar questions were asked of pupils.

Teaching methods

Teachers were asked both to indicate which teaching methods they normally used and which of those they felt had changed in recent years. Figure 5.2 shows those methods which were used frequently alongside the methods which have increased. Whole-class teaching was the only method where a number of teachers noted a decrease. The remainder had either increased (as shown in the figure) or were unchanged.

Figure 5.2: Teachers' opinions on the methods they use and how they have changed



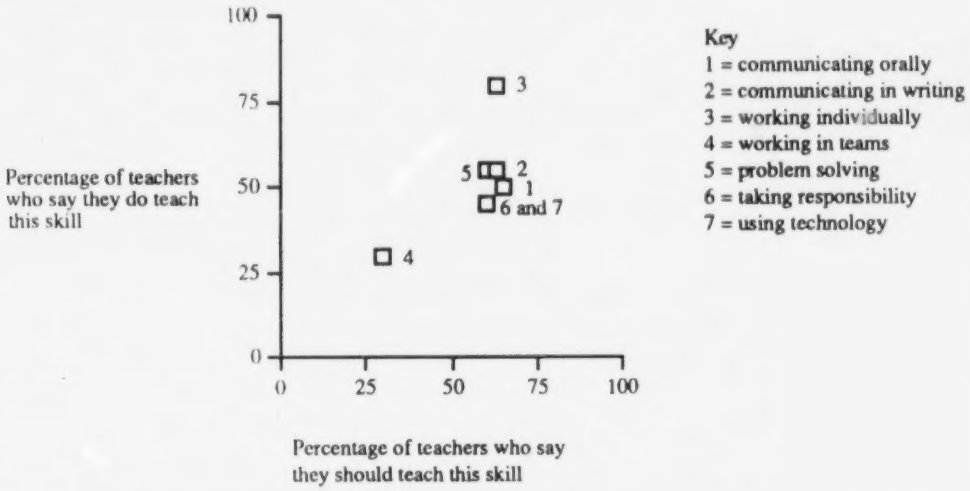
Pupils doing the same work but at their own pace was the method used by the largest group of teachers. Over three-quarters of teachers believed that there had been an increase in the methods which involved group work, differentiated work, resource-based teaching and modern technology. The first three of these link closely to the idea of flexible learning and are also those methods which are often recommended as being appropriate for the teaching of skills.

Teachers were also asked, in an open question, to suggest factors which might explain any changes in teaching methods. Most mentioned more than one factor. New examination courses (Standard Grade, Revised Higher and modular courses) were identified most frequently as the cause of changes (10 teachers). Other factors listed were student-centred learning, in-service courses and technology.

Teachers' responsibility for teaching skills

Figure 5.3 looks at a comparison between teachers' opinions on whether they should and do teach different skills in their subject areas.

Figure 5.3: Whether teachers should and do teach certain skills

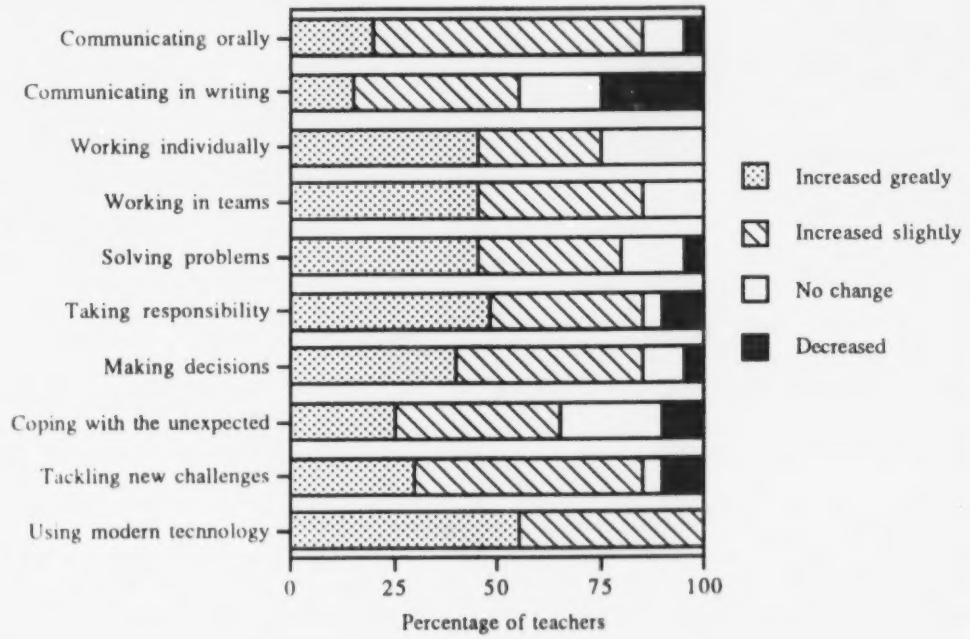


For most skills, the proportion of teachers saying they should teach certain skills is matched by the proportion of teachers who say they do teach these skills. For the skill of working in teams, this proportion is quite low (about one-quarter). Working individually is taught by the largest proportion of teachers.

Increase in pupil competence on skills

Teachers were also asked to consider whether pupil competence in various skills had changed in recent years. Figure 5.4 shows the results.

Figure 5.4: Changes in pupil competence



There were substantial differences between teachers in School D and teachers nationally in the responses relating to those skills which were thought to have increased greatly. Teachers in School D were more likely to have noticed a great increase in working individually and in teams, solving problems, tackling new challenges and using technology. We have of course no way of knowing whether School D starts from a different base line than schools nationally. However there is at least the possibility that those skills which show the biggest differences between national and school responses include those which are likely to be affected by enterprise education and flexible learning.

Again teachers were asked to suggest reasons for any changes in pupil competence and an equal number of teachers mentioned new courses and changes in teaching methods. One teacher mentioned a whole range of factors:

> *Implementation of resource-based learning in Standard Grade, Revised Higher, SCOTVEC modules and SEB short courses, 5- 14 Development Programme, SCCC guidelines, TVEI action planning and NRA.*

Pupils' perceptions

As part of the analysis of the national survey, we were able to group certain behaviours together to form five skill related factors - oral communication, working individually, working in teams, problem solving (which included taking responsibility and enterprise) and using technology. (See Chapter 5 of the accompanying national survey report for more details.) Pupils' responses on the individual behaviours were then averaged to produce a percentage for each skill. Table 5.2 shows how School D compares with the national scores.

Table 5.2: Percentage of pupils who find these skills very easy

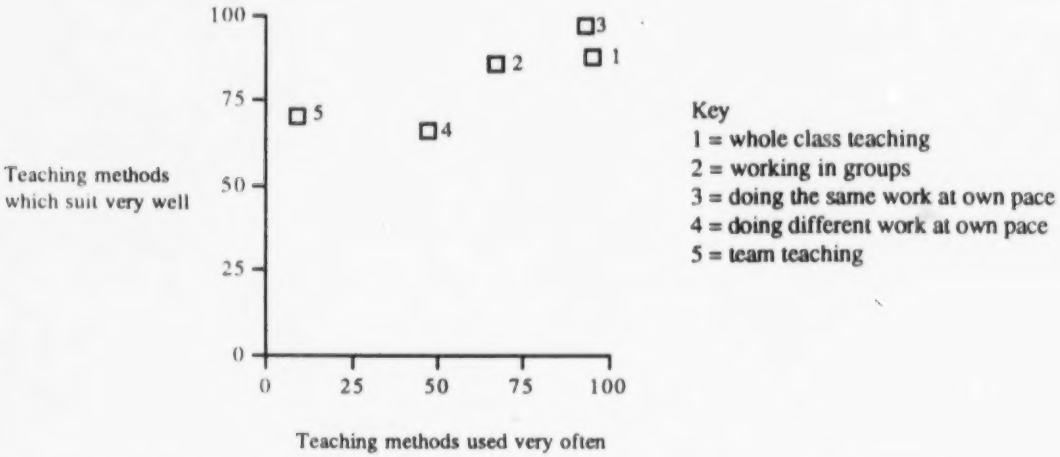
	School D	National
Oral communication	33	26
Working individually	50	34
Working in teams	49	45
Problem solving	17	17
Using technology	46	35

The average scores for School D were on the whole higher than nationally except in the area of problem solving. When the behaviours which made up these skills were considered separately, a few significant differences were noted between School D and national figures. Pupils in School D were more likely to say that it was easy to find information from computers and to work with computers. They were also more likely to say that it was easy to talk to people they had never met before. They were less likely to find it easy to solve different kinds of problems or to assess how well they were doing in their work.

Teaching methods

Pupils were asked about teaching methods which were used normally in school and also about which teaching methods they thought helped them to learn. Figure 5.5 combines the results to show the relationship between methods which are used very often in the classroom and methods which suit pupils very well.

Figure 5.5: Teaching methods used and those which suit pupils (Percentage of pupils)

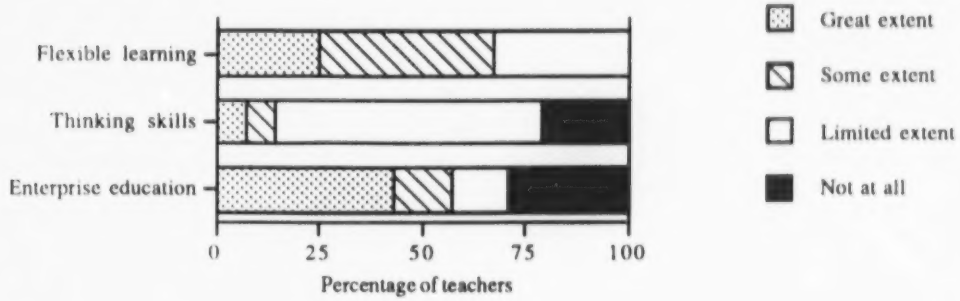


More than two-thirds of pupils thought that all methods mentioned suited them very well and for whole-class teaching, doing the same work at their own pace and working in groups there was a close relationship between normal classroom practice and pupils' preferred learning styles. Significantly more pupils in School D than in the national survey thought that individual work (both 'doing the same work' and 'doing different work') was used very often in their classrooms. This accords with the information from teachers where a large percentage said that they taught pupils to work individually.

The impact of school initiatives

Subject teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which their subject teaching had been influenced by any of three initiatives, thinking skills, flexible learning or enterprise education. Figure 5.6 shows that over half of teachers believed that both flexible learning and enterprise education had influenced their teaching at least to some extent.

Figure 5.6: The influences of different initiatives on subject teaching



Of the three, enterprise education seemed to have been a particularly strong influence. This apparently powerful effect is confirmed by the number of teachers who claimed that four of the skills in which we were interested (communicating

orally, working in teams, solving problems and taking responsibility) were strongly influenced by enterprise education (see Figure 5.1).

Information on teaching methods from staff suggested that the teaching methods which most staff perceived as being on the increase were closely linked to the characteristics of flexible learning as listed in the definition used by the Flexible Learning Group. These included group work, self-paced independent work and resource-based learning. About half of the staff made frequent use of a variety of teaching approaches, again one of the characteristics of flexible learning.

To some extent these findings were corroborated by information from pupils. More than half of them believed that whole-class teaching, working in groups and working at their own pace were used very often in classrooms. Two methods related to independent work - doing the same work at their own pace and doing different work at their own pace - were significantly more likely to be seen as being in normal use in the classroom than for the national sample.

Have these initiatives had an effect on the skills of young people in School D? Teachers certainly believed that they had seen an increase in a range of skills with more than three-quarters noting an increase in pupils' ability to:

- communicate orally;
- work in groups;
- solve problems;
- take responsibility;
- make decisions;
- tackle new challenges;
- use modern technology.

For some of these skills we do have corroborating evidence. Table 5.2 shows that more pupils found it easy to communicate orally, to work individually and in groups and to use technology than pupils in the national sample. For problem solving there was no difference between School D and the national sample.

In the opinion of teachers, the thinking skills course was making less of an impact on teaching or on increased competence than flexible learning or enterprise education. This may be due to the apparent lack of a deliberate link between the techniques developed during the course and work in other subject areas. Flexible learning is perceived as having a pervasive impact on a whole range of skills while enterprise education has strengths in particular areas.

6 Developing skills in pupils with special educational needs

TVEI aims to improve the skills of young people of all abilities. As part of this study it was considered important to include pupils with special educational needs (SEN). A study of practice in one authority was conducted. The authority was one which at the time of the study operated a system of separate provision for pupils with SEN. In addition, one other mainstream school which maintained a special unit for pupils with special educational needs was visited.

■ Gathering evidence from the special schools

Initially, four special schools were visited and the headteacher and a class teacher interviewed in each. Two were schools for children with moderate learning difficulties and two for severe and profound difficulties. All four schools cater for children from 5 to post-16. They are divided into classes on the basis of age and ability; in the schools for moderate learning difficulties age is normally the major factor while in schools for severe and profound difficulties, pupils' needs may be more important than age.

Subsequently, questionnaires were sent to six special schools. In total 41 questionnaires were returned from four schools (three of which had been visited).

Most of the questionnaire returns were from schools catering for children with severe and profound difficulties. The majority of responses were from class teachers and instructors. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show the respondents' position in the schools and their years of experience. All but two of the respondents were female.

Table 6.1: Respondents' position in the schools

Position	Number of respondents
Headteacher	1
DHT/AHT	3
PT (guidance)	1
Senior teacher	5
Class teacher	17
Instructor	14

Table 6.2: Years of experience

Number of years	Number of respondents
0-2	14
3-5	9
6-8	3
More than 8	15

Forty per cent of the respondents taught pupils of primary age, 35% taught those of secondary age and the remaining quarter taught pupils with an age range from 5 to 16+. The pupils had a variety of needs. Only one teacher taught pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Most of the respondents taught pupils with severe and/or profound learning difficulties. More than half also taught those with physical/sensory impairments or emotional/behavioural difficulties.

The curriculum

In the schools for pupils with severe and profound difficulties, external certification was in the form of SCOTVEC modules where pupils were capable of completing these. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties worked at Standard Grade courses in addition to SCOTVEC modules. In one school Standard Grade social and vocational skills (SVS) played a key role in developing transferable skills.

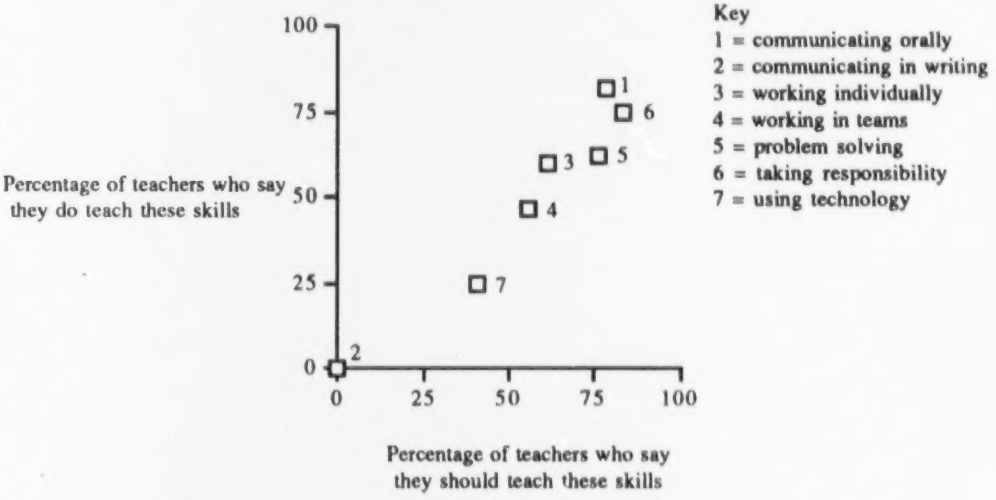
All the teachers who were interviewed said that they placed considerable emphasis on the development of transferable skills in their pupils and felt that all the skills we asked about were relevant, and were in fact at the core of their curriculum. One headteacher said:

> *There's not much point in teaching a skill if it isn't transferable, especially for our children because ... one of the difficulties they have is in generalising skills.*

The headteacher at another school felt that problem solving was now a major emphasis in education because it was a process skill which permeated every aspect of life. The particular focus for these schools was to develop all these skills in order to allow pupils as much independence as possible given their individual levels of need.

In the questionnaire, staff were asked if they thought they should be developing transferable skills in their pupils, and whether they actually taught these skills. Figure 6.1 shows those who thought they should and those who did 'to a great extent'. Communicating orally, problem solving and taking responsibility were seen as particularly important. Communicating in writing was conspicuous by its absence although one-third of respondents thought that they should develop writing skills to some extent.

Figure 6.1: Staff in special schools who felt they should and did teach these skills

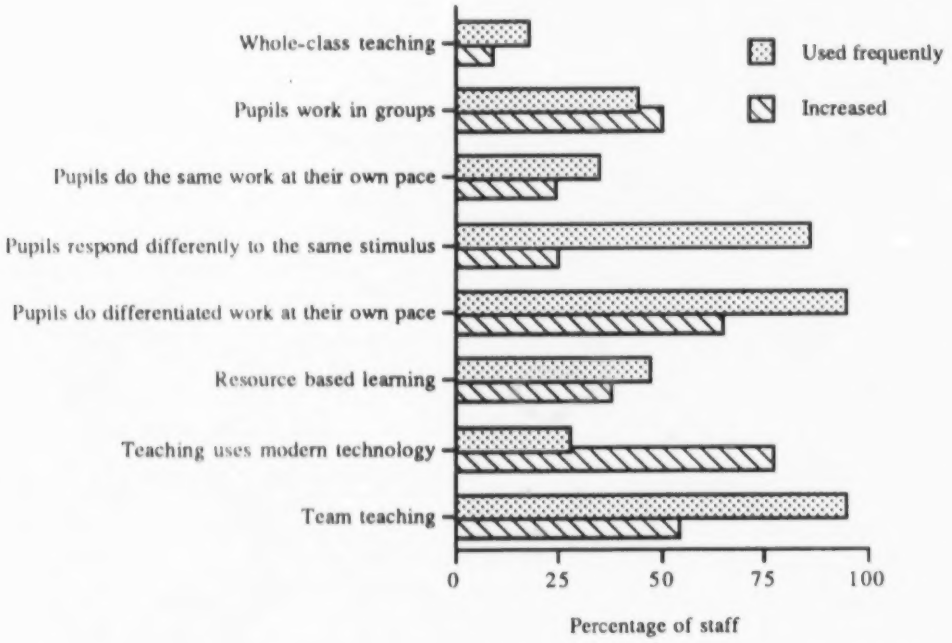


As a general trend, the number of teachers who thought they should be teaching a particular skill was matched by the number of teachers who said they did teach that skill.

Teaching methods

The questionnaire also asked about teaching methods and how they had changed. More than 80% of staff said that they frequently used team teaching, pupils doing differentiated work at their own pace and pupils responding differently to the same stimulus (Figure 6.2). This was in marked contrast to teachers from mainstream vignette schools who most frequently used whole-class teaching and pupils doing the same work at their own pace. When asked about other teaching methods, staff mentioned a wide variety. These included positive teaching, gentle teaching, interactive teaching, modeling and behaviour modification. A glossary of these terms is provided at the end of this chapter. Those most commonly used were individual teaching and behaviour modification.

Figure 6.2: Teaching methods which are used frequently and those which have increased



Teaching methods which had increased most were the use of modern technology and pupils doing differentiated work at their own pace. When asked about factors influencing change those most frequently mentioned were the availability of new technology, the changing needs of pupils within the schools, decreasing class size and staff development. TVEI was occasionally mentioned as having provided resources:

> *Changes in pupil need have obviously caused changes but additional resources, new courses and staff development have facilitated improvement in teaching methods, most of which have been provided by TVEI.*

Development of skills

How did the schools develop skills in their pupils?

The two schools for severe and profound difficulties which were visited by the researchers catered for children with a similar range of needs. Both had been strongly influenced by TVEI, but each had decided to develop pupils' transferable

skills in a different way. One school had concentrated on mini-enterprises involving a considerable amount of technology, the other had focused on pupil self-assessment. Teachers interviewed at the schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties also felt that TVEI had influenced them, but that there had also been other influences such as Standard Grade and the Compact initiative. In the questionnaire staff were asked to give examples of the ways in which transferable skills were developed in their pupils. The wide variety of examples included cause and effect toys, simple games, taking messages around the school, computer software (including touch screen programmes), the use of alternative means of communication where appropriate, mini-enterprise and many 'real life' activities (e.g. cooking, making choices, tidying up). Staff stressed that these skills permeated the whole curriculum of pupils with special educational needs. Developments in the individual schools are described in more detail below.

Schools for pupils with severe and profound difficulties

In one school, the headteacher felt that 60% of the time-table for the senior class (post 16) had been influenced by TVEI. TVEI resources had provided a specialist technical teacher two mornings a week and equipment for working with plastics such as a vacuum forming machine. The pupils made simple items such as trays, photograph frames and boxes and sold them. The headteacher said:

> *The important thing was that the pupils had made something that somebody wanted to buy, there was a terrific sense of achievement.*

Another initiative had been the coffee club, where once a week pupils served coffee and baking to the public. This was a mini-enterprise in which pupils were involved in every stage from buying the raw materials, through making and selling the product to banking the profits; it also provided in-school work experience for pupils. Running the coffee club involved a great deal of cross curricular activity; for example the napkins were screen printed by the pupils. Involvement in the coffee club had built up the confidence of the pupils in meeting and dealing with members of the public and was also supplying a social need within the local community. Other activities included badge making, printing Christmas cards and making plastic-laminated place mats.

These types of activities provided many opportunities for the development of transferable skills. Pupils had to work in teams to make the food or to print the napkins, they were each responsible for a particular job, and they had to make decisions about the quality of the finished product. They had responsibility for their own appearance when meeting the public, and were constantly enhancing their language and communication skills. The work with plastics involved manipulative skills, using technology, working individually and in teams and taking responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. The headteacher was very positive about the influence of TVEI and said:

> *It's done a tremendous job for the top end of the school, and given us a vision that we wouldn't have had before, of the capabilities of pupils with severe learning difficulties.*

Some pupils who had successfully built up their skills through these TVEI projects were then able to do work experience outside the school, for example working in a catering company or setting tables and washing dishes in an old people's home. This gave them a sense of achievement and self-esteem.

With the cessation of TVEI funding, the school now had the responsibility for continuing this work. The coffee club was flourishing but without the specialist technical teacher it was difficult to find the time to continue some of the other initiatives. One of the instructors in the school was qualified to use the machinery to produce items in plastic and other funding would have to be sought to make use of his expertise.

In the second school there was a major emphasis on giving pupils responsibility. The oldest group of pupils was left to work independently a good deal and were given a number of tasks for the day which it was their responsibility to complete. They were used to showing visitors round the school and discussing their work. Each year the student group elected a head and deputy head boy and girl. They discussed the responsibilities the head pupil should have and decided the rules for voting. The head pupils each year are proud of their position and carry out their responsibilities very conscientiously.

Skills, including decision making and taking responsibility, are developed in pupils from an early stage. Throughout the school there was an emphasis on pictorial cues to encourage independence, from instructions on making a drink of juice in the primary classroom to folders with instructions on how to cook a meal and clear up in the home economics area. Clear colour photographs showed each stage in the task and were accompanied by simple text. Pupils who had mastered tasks using photographs could then move on to line drawings. The assistant head felt that this was an example of the way that teaching methods had been moving away from teacher direction and were becoming more pupil-centred:

> *Cue cards and pictures were developed because we wanted the staff to stand back, we wanted the pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers find it very hard to stand back and watch pupils making mistakes but we provided backups like structuring the material very tightly by using cue cards, by reducing our language, ensuring they made mistakes but not so disastrously that it put them off.*

The school had developed a system of self-evaluation for the pupils which is described further below.

Schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties

Both schools had designated post-16 units. In one school this was a very recent addition. The unit consisted of a classroom and common room which had been decorated by the pupils. There were only a few post-16 pupils and for them the focus was on getting ready to leave school and to be as independent as possible in adult life.

The emphasis in this school was increasingly on active teaching and learning, with pupils being involved in their own learning and with the emphasis on real life experience. As the headteacher explained:

> *It's better that they can work in groups, get on with people, take responsibility for themselves, look after themselves than slog away at the good old reading, writing, arithmetic.*

One way in which transferable skills were being developed was by a Standard Grade SVS course. The themes were home, work and community and pupils must undertake certain experiences. One of these is planning and running a community event, for which the S4 pupils were organising a whole-school

Christmas party. The requirement to make items and provide a service was fulfilled by the work involved in running a cafe which was open one day a week. Pupils were involved in buying the raw materials, preparing food, serving the customers and dealing with the money. The cafe was set up with funding from the Compact initiative. Pupils also participated in team enterprise as part of the SVS course; last year an integrated group from this school and a local mainstream secondary set up a company to make badges.

The work experience module was not taken at the same time as SVS but was taken by some pupils, along with other modules, in S5 or S6. The headteacher and class teacher interviewed in this school felt that although TVEI had enabled changes to take place, other influences had been 5-14, Standard Grade (particularly the SVS course) and the fact that pupils were tending to stay on longer at school than a few years ago.

The fourth school visited is a large school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Here the post-16 unit catered for 32 pupils. The teacher of this unit felt that its whole ethos was about taking responsibility and many of the pupils' activities involved transferable skills. There were weekly staff-student meetings with students having the responsibility for making up the agenda, chairing and participating in the meeting, and taking minutes. They were involved in team enterprise and a successful business which involved communication, taking responsibility and other skills. The impetus for this initiative had come from the Region. The pupils organise a holiday every year; the next one is to EuroDisney and they will do an Experiencing Europe SCOTVEC module as a lead up to this. Organising the holiday involves responsibility and teamwork. As in two other schools, the pupils ran a cafe. Pupils took two modules; food preparation and food presentation, and the activity was also seen as a simulated work experience. The headteacher felt that it was a good replica of real life.

The pupils generally took part in leisure activities on a Friday afternoon, either in the school or in the local community. Some physically handicapped pupils were unable to take part in many of the activities and instead ran a school radio service using equipment provided by TVEI. Again this involved transferable skills, particularly communication and responsibility. TVEI also supported an extensive work experience programme in S4 to S6.

The teacher of the post-16 unit, like teachers in the other schools, felt that teaching was moving away from an emphasis on knowledge and towards more active learning and learning through experience, with more emphasis on the pupil's role in the learning process.

Responsibilities for pupils

The questionnaire asked staff about the responsibilities pupils were given, the extent of pupil involvement in work experience and enterprise, and the value of work experience and enterprise. Across the four schools only a minority of teachers felt that their pupils had much responsibility for setting their own targets, assessing their own progress, choosing what to study, and planning their own study time. None felt that organising their own homework time-table was appropriate.

Nearly two-thirds of teachers said that at least some of their pupils for whom

it was appropriate were taking part in mini-enterprise, young enterprise or team enterprise. Forty-four per cent said that at least some pupils were taking part in school-based work experience and 38% that pupils were taking part in work experience outside the school. However, almost all said that some or all of their pupils took part in other activities outside the school such as shopping or leisure activities. The vast majority of staff agreed that work experience and enterprise projects were valuable experiences for their pupils (Figures 6.3 and 6.4).

Figure 6.3: Views about work experience

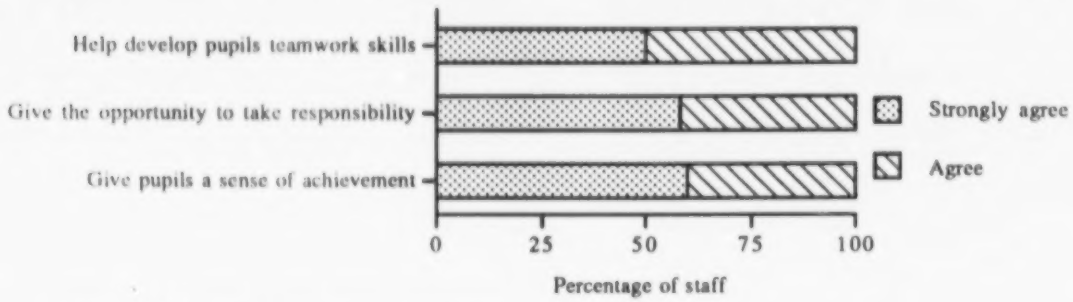
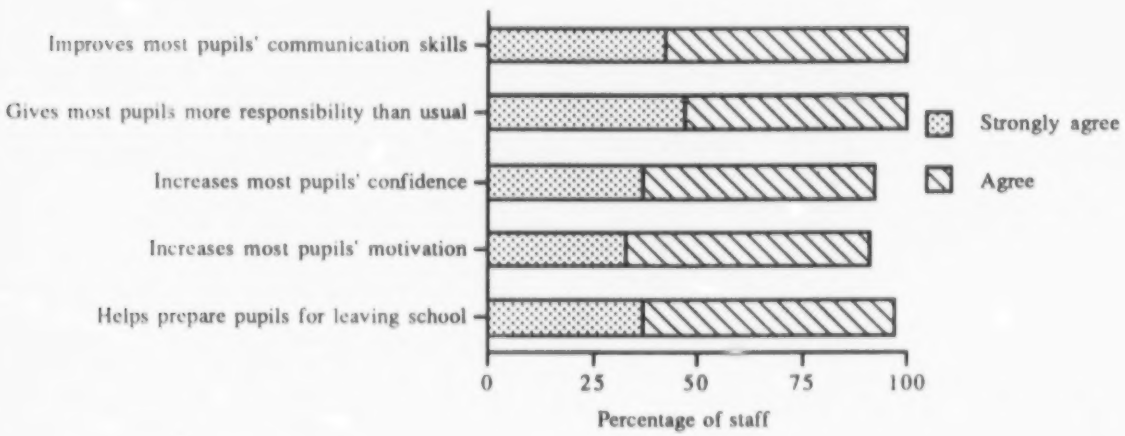


Figure 6.4: Views about enterprise projects



Assessment of skills

How did the schools assess pupils' skills?

The two schools for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties which were visited had different approaches to assessment. In one most of the assessment was carried out by the teacher. A profiling system was linked to the SCOTVEC modules which were taken by the pupils and to the National Record of Achievement. A sheet for each module for each pupil listed the specific needs and goals of that pupil. The teacher filled in a checklist of sub-skills indicating whether the pupil had displayed a particular skill with or without any help or reminder. These checklists were then used to write a profile of the pupil.

The other school had a well developed pupil self-assessment scheme in addition to assessment by the teacher. Assessment sheets were originally devised for sport and fitness but similar ones were now used for computing and home economics. A system of 'happy and sad faces' was used throughout the school

and pupils of all ages became used to associating happy faces with working well or with enjoying an activity. The self-assessment sheets used the happy and sad faces and asked pupils to colour in the appropriate face to show how well they had worked, how much they had enjoyed the activity and how well they had worked with a partner. A great deal of work had been done to build up the pupils' understanding that it is perfectly alright not to enjoy something and to say so but still to have to do it. This had taken a very long time but staff felt that the system was now working well. The headteacher said:

> *It's extremely motivating for the youngsters to be completing these assessment forms at the end of the activity because there's a lot of discussion, I observed class 2 at their fitness and leisure activities this week, and there is so much excitement and enthusiasm and interest right up to the very end when they listened to the scores and who's worked harder and who's completed their form the neatest, there's a lot of thought and a lot of discussion taking place.*

The self-assessment sheets became progressively more sophisticated. The happy and sad faces were used throughout for enjoyment, but were joined by an 'OK' face on the more difficult tasks. The happy and sad faces for effort were replaced by three stars and then by the numbers 1, 2, 3. The forms gradually became more complex with more writing (e.g. 'What did you enjoy the most and the least') and sometimes space for more than one lesson on the same sheet. Pupils had the responsibility for filing their forms and, if appropriate, retaining a sheet to complete the next portion later. Staff believed that pupils were proud of their records and that it let them see how hard they had been working.

The main form of assessment in the first of the schools for pupils with moderate learning diffiulties was the individual educational programme for each child. The teachers planned their work for six weeks and for each subject wrote an individual programme for each child and then an evaluation of what the child had achieved. The headteacher felt the need for a more structured assessment system but felt that this was very difficult given the range of need. The emphasis was on social and interpersonal skills as much as academic achievement and the transferability of the skills was assessed. Teachers assigned pupils to one of three stages: working on a particular skill, able to do the skill once, and able to do the skill several times in different situations. The class teacher for the post-16 unit was using some self-assessment sheets, for example for interview skills; the pupils compared their own assessment with the interviewer's assessment.

Assessment in the fourth school visited was partly by modular outcomes and partly by self-assessment. Each pupil had an Individual Action Plan including targets for personal and social development (PSD) and for all the modules they were taking. Assessment grades were: 'target achieved independently', 'target achieved with minimal help/assistance', 'target achieved with difficulty' and 'target not achieved'. Pupils had two individual interviews a year to set PSD targets.

Records of Achievement (NRA/ROA)

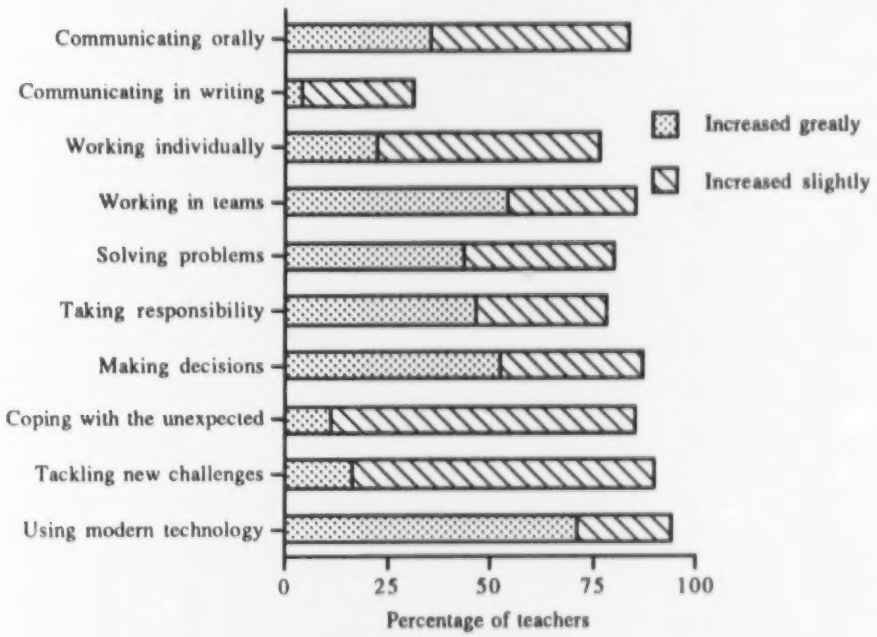
All the schools were working on NRA/ROA for this year's leavers and some had also produced them for pupils who left last year. The schools for severe and profound difficulties in particular made extensive use of photographs to show pupils' achievements, for the benefit not only of the pupils and the colleges or training centres where they would be going, but also for the parents. Staff in the

school with extensive self-assessment said in interview that they felt the fact that the pupils had been doing this helped them with their personal statements because they had built up the ability to be honest about themselves and felt able to talk about their weaknesses as well as their strengths. Several of the teachers interviewed felt that the NRA/ROA was a positive document which showed what pupils could do rather than what they couldn't. One said, 'it's a lot of work but worthwhile'. The questionnaire data supported this view. All the respondents said that they felt the NRA/ROA was very useful or quite useful for providing information on qualifications, school achievements, achievements and experiences outside school and for a personal statement. Just under half said that employers, FE college staff or adult training centre staff had been involved in commenting on pupils' NRA/ROA. Less than a quarter of staff felt that pupils had much responsibility for choosing what went into their NRA/ROA.

Has pupil competence changed?

In the questionnaire teachers were asked about changes in pupil competence in specific skills. The majority felt that all of these had improved. Writing was perceived to have improved by the smallest proportion of teachers echoing the national survey of mainstream schools (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5: Staff who felt competence in these skills had increased



When asked what had been the major factors responsible for changes in pupil competence, those most commonly mentioned were resources, including new technology, staff development, changes in the ability level of pupils in the school, and increasing staff expectations of what their pupils were capable:

> *More attention [is] paid to the abilities of pupils with SEN and expectations have risen. Pupils have been encouraged to stretch themselves and reach their potential.*

All the teachers interviewed felt that the emphasis on transferable skills had definitely increased over the last few years. This was attributed partly to TVEI, and partly to other initiatives such as 5-14, SCOTVEC and Standard Grade, all of which concentrated on skills. Most of them felt that pupils were aware of the skills they were being taught, at least at the upper end of the school. One headteacher thought that this was partly because skills such as taking responsibility and working in teams were explicitly stated as outcomes within SCOTVEC modules. The teachers all agreed that pupil competence in such skills had increased. Another headteacher said:

> *I think their confidence has [increased] greatly, and I think with the confidence you're going to get better communication skills. I think it's the improvement in self-esteem. I am somebody, I'm a young person, I'm as good as the next. I think this is very clear in the kind of things that have been going on.*

Similar feelings were expressed by the headteacher at another school. Although the pupils tended to have greater needs than those of a few years ago, she said:

> *I see even in the few months we've had the post-16 unit a difference in the children's ability to relate to adults, in their confidence, in their ability to accept responsibility, their ability to work together as a group in that kind of context, because their curriculum is based on real life activities.*

Further education and training

When they left school, pupils with severe learning difficulties would go either to an adult training centre or to FE college. Teachers who were interviewed at the two schools for such pupils expressed reservations about what was on offer for their pupils at training centres or FE colleges. In one school, some pupils had acquired quite a high standard of computing ability, in part resulting from the opportunity to attend a local TVEI technology centre. They had successfully completed relevant SCOTVEC modules. Both teachers and parents had hoped that they would be able to continue developing their skills in further education. However, the parents of two former pupils had been into the school recently, desperately unhappy because their children had begun to regress at FE college. One of the parents said that her son, who has severe learning difficulties, had found that the Apple Mac at the college was still in its box and had been able, through his TVEI training, to assemble it and set it up. The assistant head said:

> *I think it's disappointing for us that the enthusiasm should be lost, never mind the skills, but the enthusiasm for learning, taking responsibility for your own learning and organising your own learning that has been built up ... in the school. And because of [the self-assessment sheets] the young person can now come home and say 'I am not enjoying college because ...' We've built up this ability for them to communicate and take responsibility and they turn round and tell you well, I really want to do more than this.*

The other school had set up a group consisting of the depute managers of the local adult training centres, the assistant district officer responsible for the management and administration of the centres and school staff. This was in an attempt to:

> *bridge the gap between what we're trying to do and what the adult training centres have on offer ... They were having so much here that the whole horizon had changed and what were they going on to?'*

The headteacher felt that some progress had been made but that there was still a long way to go.

Pupils with moderate learning difficulties had more options; some would attend adult training centres, others would take a life skills course at FE college then move either to YT or to a full-time college place. The college courses or YT placements were frequently in areas such as leisure and recreation, catering, painting and decorating or machine skills, where low levels of literacy and numeracy are acceptable. A few pupils from one of the schools had found full time employment, sometimes straight from school and sometimes after training.

Whole-school and TVEI support

For various reasons, the four schools visited were at different stages in finalising their School Development Plans and in formulating written policies for the curriculum followed by senior pupils. Two schools had new or relatively new headteachers. One written policy, from a school for pupils with severe and profound difficulties, mentioned the development of skills under eight headings: communication skills, social skills, decision making, movement development, daily living skills, numeracy, creative development and practical and vocational abilities. Also mentioned were community involvement, responsibility and independence.

Over 90% of staff who completed questionnaires said that staff development and a supportive senior management had encouraged the development of transferable skills. More than 70% also said that whole-school policy, the school's Development Plan and a school audit including transferable skills had also supported them.

All the teachers interviewed appreciated the resources and equipment provided by TVEI, such as computers and software, video cameras, language masters and equipment for working with wood and plastics. Staff development courses had been well attended. Courses mentioned were opportunities for computing, including the concept keyboard and touch screen, opportunities to review software, learning to use the video camera and other equipment. There had also been guidance and counselling courses, and teachers in three schools had found a course on profiling particularly helpful. In one school the teacher who had attended this course had repeated it for the whole staff.

One headteacher made the point that transferable skills were as important for the staff as they were for the pupils, in particular working in teams. Another headteacher said that staff in her school were now able to continue many of the activities begun under TVEI because of the skills that they had gained. In general, TVEI staff development courses were popular with teachers because they addressed their needs:

> *The advantage of TVEI I think, the tremendous plus as far as we were concerned, is that the TVEI staff development courses were certainly planned according to our needs Staff can at times attend in-service that is available and on a personal basis, yes they may have benefited, but very often they will come back and say it was a good day but it really didn't address our level. TVEI did.... And if a particular course didn't meet your needs then it was very easy for us to phone the TVEI staff development officer and say this is something that we would like for our establishment and we could have a visit, have school-based in-service. The resources were wonderful too, but I think from the school point of view the staff development is an area that I will miss very much.*

■ Special education in a mainstream school

The school we visited had three different learning support areas; the special unit, the learning support base and the review base. The special unit was for the benefit of pupils with recorded needs. According to their level of needs the pupil spent different proportions of their time in the unit. The learning support base was used for both teachers and pupils to work on their own. Children who had no time-tabled extraction could use the base as necessary and learning support teachers working in a mainstream class could send pupils to the base. For example, pupils who had problems writing could be sent to the base to do some word processing. The base was also used with pupils with short term difficulties to work with a member of the learning support staff. The review base was a recent development and was a behavioural support unit where pupils could go for counselling.

Overall, five staff were attached to learning support and during our visit to the school we spoke to four of them. We also asked subject teachers who had contact with pupils with SEN in mainstream classes to complete a questionnaire and 15 (50%) of them did so. The subject teachers included teachers from nine different subject areas.

Pupils in the special unit

There were 12 pupils with recorded needs in the school but because of the integration with mainstream education there were rarely more than six or seven pupils in the special unit at any given time. The range of both age and ability is wide and each pupil is on an individual time-table. Some pupils are able to cope with Standard grade courses while others spend the majority of their time in the unit. The unit is as much a social unit as an education unit.

> *We try to function as a family group, that they are supportive of one another that they are caring.*

Importance of skills

Both the principal teacher of learning support and the senior teacher responsible for the special unit agreed that communication and in particular oral communication was all-important for pupils with SEN.

> *It is essential that they are encouraged to talk, to talk all the time. There is a tremendous amount of language goes on - all day, every day from the time they come in there are very few peaceful moments.*

Other 'TVEI' skills such as working individually, problem solving and taking responsibility were also encouraged within the limitations of individual needs. To encourage pupils to work individually, they are given free time in the unit to choose their own activities and are encouraged to use this time constructively and at a level which is appropriate

> *By doing it gently is does work, they will leave the LEGO and move on and do some work on the computer.*

Problem solving is viewed partly as a way of encouraging pupils to find strategies for getting round their own difficulties. The senior teacher in charge of the special unit explained that some of the pupils were easily frustrated that problem solving had to be carefully managed in small steps at a time. Encouraging the development of the ability to work as part of a team was thought to be more difficult as some pupils were very self-centred and this particular group was very volatile.

Taking responsibility was recognised as an important skills for these young people which at a very basic level involved getting them to take responsibility for their own actions. However, the school organises residential stays each year both in the UK and overseas and the pupils take part in fund raising events to cover the cost of these excursions. All the pupils attached to the unit are also involved in work experience and here they have an advantage over the mainstream pupils as they can be more flexible about the time spent on work experience When asked what kind of work experience was involved the senior teacher said

You name it they've been there. Everything from farming to ... to local factories to play group and old people's homes.

Subject teachers' views

In the questionnaire, subject teachers were asked to indicate whether they put more or less emphasis on each of the 'TVEI' skills for pupils with recorded needs. The majority of teachers reported that the skills of working in teams, problem-solving and taking responsibility were emphasised equally for both mainstream pupils and pupils with SEN. Less emphasis was put on communicating in writing and more emphasis on communicating orally, using technology and, to a lesser extent, working individually. Several of the subject teachers added comments to stress the considerable benefits of computers for pupils with recorded needs.

Development of keyboarding skills, word processing software with spell check facilities can help pupils with poor ability in the area [of written communication]

Pupils are given access to technology in the form of Tandy and Lap Top computers. They are taught how to use these and they are used in class across the curriculum

Support for mainstream teachers

One of our main reasons for including a school with a special unit was to ask about the relationship between the learning support teachers and the mainstream staff. Thirteen out of the fifteen subject teachers who completed a questionnaire said that they had little or no training for meeting the needs of pupils with SEN. However, twelve of them reported that they did get support in the school. The PT learning support had noticed changes in the last few years

Teachers have become more independent, more aware of the need for differentiation. We're not asked for help as much as we once were.

Learning support staff do get involved in the development of new courses so that these can be adjusted to meet the needs of different abilities before they are finalised for use with classes.

The advantages of a special unit

Both the headteacher and the senior teacher in charge of the special unit felt strongly that pupils with SEN should have equal access with other pupils to the full curriculum and should be integrated wherever possible. Even when for academic reasons pupils were mainly based in the special unit, they were able to integrate with mainstream claasses for social education. It was also felt that both sections of the school supported each other.

For guidance and pastoral care there are other members of staff I can turn to. Likewise if they have a specific problem in mainstream they'll come to us.

Glossary of teaching methods

POSITIVE TEACHING: A fairly general teaching method where the teacher always focuses on positive aspects of behaviour.

GENTLE TEACHING: This method relies on the rejection of any reaction by the teacher which could be construed as punitive. Inappropriate behaviour is ignored and the individual is redirected to another activity which then becomes the vehicle for the introduction of reward. Only the behaviour is ignored, not the individual.

INTERACTIVE TEACHING: A method used with children with profound learning difficulties where staff member and pupil engage in the kind of one-to-one interaction which characterises early infant interaction. The staff member accepts what the pupil brings to the session and responds creatively to the pupil. The purpose is to build a communicative relationship and to promote such things as pupil initiations, eye contact, turn-taking and understanding of cause and effect.

BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION: A highly structured approach to altering behaviour. Reinforcement is used to strengthen, weaken, or maintain target behaviours. One of the goals of behaviour modification is to encourage children to move from the need for physical and tangible reinforcement to social reinforcement.

MODELLING: Verbal instructions or imitation are used to teach a pupil new behaviour. There are three stages; demonstration by the teacher, imitation by the pupil and reinforcement of the imitation. Modelling also occurs when one pupil observes that another pupil engaged in learning is being reinforced for his/her behaviour and copies the behaviour.

7 Points from the vignettes

The vignette studies reported in this booklet were designed mainly to satisfy the second aim of the evaluation:

- to identify any particular approaches used in TVEI which have proved successful in promoting the acquisition of the skills of communicating, working individually and in teams, problem solving, taking responsibility and enterprise.

Two basic strategies, which are not mutually exclusive, were used in the mainstream schools visited. These involved whole school approaches to the development of skills and specific skills-based courses for pupils.

> Can you develop 'TVEI' skills across the curriculum or do you need to design special courses to teach them directly? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?

Whole-school approaches

Two schools emphasised a whole school approach to the development of skills. School A focused on an audit of skills to ensure that all skills were neither under-taught nor over-taught. Staff moved on from this initial stage to develop teaching resources and units in a range of subjects which incorporated essential skills. School D used a variety of staff development initiatives, including the 'de-mystification' of flexible learning, to support teachers in their teaching of skills. In both cases a small band of interested staff members worked together identifying existing good practice on which to build. Over a period of time, all members of staff were involved and, particularly in School A, both teaching and non-teaching staff were fully consulted at the early stages of development.

> In attempting to introduce whole school initiatives, is a genuine effort made to consult and involve all staff? Do some schools need support in determining a base line of practice on which to build? Do they make the best use of existing expertise?

Specific skills-based courses

Three of the schools visited dealt with the challenge of developing skills in young people by offering courses which focused on particular skills. These included PSD for senior pupils, an entitlement to social and vocational skills (SVS) for S3/S4 pupils and enterprise education for S3/S4 pupils. Several common themes emerged from each of these special courses. The element of choice for pupils (albeit choice within a structured framework) was an important aim although this aim was not always perceived as being met.

> Complete freedom of choice is rare in any walk of life. Do pupils have reasonable expectations of choice? Do teachers explain the limits of choice and the reason for these limits?

There was an emphasis on the need to make explicit to pupils those skills which were being developed as part of the course and the courses were designed to encourage the acquisition of certain skills. Both enterprise education and the SVS course were noted as being effective in three skills in particular; working in teams, problem solving and taking responsibility. More of the senior pupils involved in the PSD course than senior pupils in other schools felt comfortable with oral communication, working individually, working in teams and problem solving.

> How often is the effort made to give pupils an awareness of the aims of their learning?

School C concentrated its skill development in two Standard Grade courses; SVS and PE. These courses were part of the entitlement curriculum and had the added bonus of providing pupils with certificated qualifications.

> What are the advantages and disadvantages of delivering transferable skills through set courses?

Teaching, learning and assessment in mainstream and special schools

Schools differed in the extent to which there was agreement from teachers' and pupils' on the teaching methods used in mainstream classrooms. For example, in School A there was a substantial difference between teachers' and pupils' perceptions of the frequency of group work and the frequency of differentiated work. In School D, there was general agreement between teachers and pupils on the teaching methods used. School D was in the process of providing staff development for all teachers on flexible learning and this included review materials to help them be more aware of their teaching style.

> How can teachers be supported in analysing their teaching style? Are certain styles more suited to some subjects than to others? Are certain styles more suited to skills development than others?

The largest number of pupils, both nationally and in the individual schools visited, preferred to learn by doing the same work as others but at their own pace. Smaller numbers preferred to learn through whole class teaching.

> Do teachers ask their pupils how they like to learn? Do they offer sufficient variation in teaching styles to suit all of the pupils some of the time?

Pupils do not believe that doing different work from other pupils in the class is a helpful way of learning since this was the method which was selected by the smallest numbers of pupils. Teachers on the other hand report that this is a method which is on the increase and current debate suggests that this form of differentiation is one which is likely to help pupils to make progress. In our study

few pupils reported that they had much experience of doing different work than others at their own pace and it may be that their lack of enthusiasm for such a method is based on lack of familiarity.

> Is it just lack of familiarity which prevents pupils from thinking that doing different work from others would help them learn? How might staff balance the different educational needs of individual children with their need not to feel different from their peers?

Staff in special schools had a very different profile of teaching methods than those of mainstream schools. Fewer made frequent use of whole class teaching and teaching which involved pupils working at their own pace on the same work. Many more used team teaching and differentiated teaching. In addition, a range of teaching methods were mentioned by staff in special schools which were not referred to by any mainstream schools These included positive teaching, gentle teaching and behaviour modification.

> Would some of the teaching methods which are used in special schools be applicable to mainstream teaching? Is there sufficient dialogue between teachers in different sectors for each to learn from the other? How best can mainstream teachers make use of the expertise of learning support specialists in their own environment?

In the mainstream schools, few teachers whom we spoke to assessed the range of skills in which we were interested unless they formed part of an examination course. By contrast, staff in special schools spent some considerable time discussing the ways in which they used both teacher and self assessment. This difference in assessment reflects the difference in teaching methods. Assessment must be an integral part of any system which makes frequent use of differentiated teaching.

> To what extent would teachers in mainstream schools have to rethink their assessment strategies if they wanted to increase their use of differentiated teaching?

It may also be that because fewer pupils in special schools can attain Standard Grade certificates or SCOTVEC modules, teachers have no choice but to devise their own assessment arrangements.

> If certain skills are not assessed, will they be seen to be of less value than those which are assessed? Can pupils be provided with criteria which will help them to assess their own skills development?

Continuity between special schools and further education or training

Staff in special schools were enthusiastic about the increase in pupil competence over the last few years. They expressed disappointment that this improvement was not followed through when the young people entered adult training centres or FE colleges.

> Does there need to be more liaison between the sectors to ensure a continuity of progression when young people with special educational needs leave school?

Support from TVEI

Special schools made reference to the impact of TVEI in providing technology, resources and trained staff to allow pupils to experience a wide range of hands on activities. They expressed some concern as to how these benefits would be maintained once funding from TVEI was no longer separately available.

> What support can schools be given to ensure that existing good practice will be maintained?

Both special schools and mainstream schools were in agreement in identifying targeted staff development as a valued aspect of TVEI. In particular they valued the clear statement of aims of staff development courses, the ability to negotiate the content to suit their own situation and the emphasis on the need to evaluate courses.

> To what extent have schools put these features into practice in their own in-school staff development?

8 The role of TVEI

There is sufficient evidence from the survey to show that the skills which TVEI identified as the focus for this study are among those valued by staff in FE and HE institutions and employers. The majority of school liaison staff in FE and HE institutions and senior school staff agreed that performance had improved in the ability to communicate orally, to work in teams, to solve problems and to use technology. Senior staff in schools were particularly well pleased as more than half thought that there had been improvement in all 'TVEI' skills. More than 90% of employers were satisfied with the performance of recent school leavers in the two skills which they had identified as most important - the ability to communicate orally and to work in teams. Comparisons with pupils in 1993 and 1988 indicated that more pupils felt at ease in their ability to communicate, to work in teams, to solve problems and to use technology. More than three-quarters of pupils also believed that school was good at helping them develop each of the skills. There is, therefore, evidence to suggest that schools have been successful in helping pupils to acquire most of the 'TVEI' skills. Is there any evidence that TVEI has played a role in this success?

Evidence for the positive influence of TVEI comes partly from teachers' perceptions in response to two questions in the national survey and partly from our discussions with senior staff in the schools we visited. The two questions in the survey were:

- What factors influenced changes in pupil performance?
- What factors influenced changes in teaching methods?

Factors influencing changes in pupil performance

Although the largest number of teachers referred to changes in the curriculum such as the move towards Standard grade, Revised highers and modules, the second largest group referred to a range of TVEI experiences. These included technology enhancement, problem solving inserts, development of PSD, work experience, enterprise education and targeted staff development. The third most frequently suggested factor was new teaching and learning methods such as pupil-centred approaches, flexible learning and active participative learning. This last factor leads neatly into the responses to the second question.

Factors influencing changes in teaching methods

The influence selected by the largest single group of school staff was TVEI. It was recognised to have been instrumental in promoting pupil-centred learning, differentiation and flexible learning. New examination and assessment arrangements were mentioned by the second largest group. Staff development and the increased use of technology were also highlighted by several respondents and these too were often linked to TVEI in our discussions with staff in schools.

School D which used staff development on flexible learning as part of a whole school approach to the development of skills and also provided enterprise education for S3/S4 pupil, acknowledged the importance of TVEI in both areas. The special schools we visited had depended largely on TVEI for technological resources and training to open up a new world of communication and achievement for their pupils. Staff had also benefited from the quality of staff development offered by TVEI. Senior staff in school A felt that without the training and expertise offered by TVEI, the audit of skills which was at the heart of their approach to skills development would have been far less effective.

It is clear that a range of initiatives including TVEI, Standard grade courses and, more recently, Revised highers, modules and the 5-14 development programme have all been working together to focus on the acquisition of personal and transferable skills and to promote changes to teaching and learning which will help develop these skills.

Successful approaches to the acquisition of 'TVEI' skills

Two basic strategies designed to promote the acquisition and development of personal and transferable skills were used in the schools we visited. These strategies, whole-school approaches and specific skills-based courses, were not mutually exclusive.

Three vignette studies emphasised a whole-school approach to the development of skills.

Vignette A	An audit of skills to identify common skills and ensure that these were neither under-taught nor over-taught.
Vignette D	A staff development programme on the 'demystification' of flexible learning to encourage teaching methods which would promote the development of the skills which were the focus of this study.
Vignette E	Personal and transferable skills as permeating skills across the curriculum for pupils with SEN.

Schools in three studies used specific skills-based courses for the development of selected skills.

Vignette B	Personal and social development for senior pupils which focused on the skills of communicating, working in teams and taking responsibility.
Vignette C	An entitlement for S3/S4 pupils in social and vocation skills and physical education (both Standard grade courses). SVS focused on the skills of oral communication, working in teams, solving problems and taking responsibility.
Vignette D	Courses on thinking skills for pupils in S1/S2 and enterprise education for pupils in S3/S4. Enterprise education influenced the development of oral communication, working in teams, solving problems and taking responsibility

The various school strategies designed to encourage the acquisition and development of 'TVEI' skills were mainly successful in their aims and the full descriptions documented in this part of the publication highlight their successes and limitations.

Whether a whole-school approach or a specific skills-based course was used common themes emerged for each.

- Whole-school approaches involved:
  - beginning with a small band of enthusiasts;
  - identifying existing good practice;
  - consulting widely;
  - making the best use of existing expertise within the school;
  - analysing staff needs;
  - targeting staff development;
  - phasing in initiatives;
  - supportive senior management.
- Specific skills-based courses depended on:
  - making pupils aware of the skills being taught;
  - providing opportunities for identified skills;
  - using pupil-centred teaching methods;
  - emphasising choice for pupils.

Looking to the future

TVEI has had a major role to play in influencing the acquisition and development of personal and transferable skills working hand in hand with other initiatives. As one of the headteachers whom we talked to made clear TVEI was one of several positive influences in this regard:

> *I would find it hard to separate out TVEI from the rest of developments. It's an underpinning of all your strategies to take learning and teaching right across the school. One wonders how one would have done without it but it has been integrated with the whole approach within the school to support learning.*

Young people preparing for working life in today's rapidly changing society can no longer look forward to continuous employment in the same fields. They must be prepared for a number of career changes. All the personal and transferable skills which have been the focus of this study will stand them in good stead in any employment and indeed in adult life, some of the skills having a greater or lesser emphasis at different periods. The descriptions and comments provided by teachers who participated in this study may suggest strategies which can be tried or adapted to suit the needs of all young people.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Designed & Printed by Metro Press, Edinburgh